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Cover by Emsh

Robert A. W. Lowndes, Editor

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# INTERFERENCE

by Don Berry

(illustrated by EMSH)

**T**HE NIGHT was sharply cold, and the barren branches of trees were etched in black against the frozen moon.

Two men walked quickly down the narrow London street, and stopped in front of a many-gabled house. The windows were heavily curtained, but through the crack of the door came a pale yellow shaft of light, the warmth of a lamp within the house.

The taller of the two men turned to his companion. "This should be it," he said softly.

The slight man beside him shrugged. They mounted the steps and hammered on the door. It was answered by a frail man, not old, perhaps forty at most, but with a kind of wisdom in his face.

"Yes, what is it?" he asked. He closed the collar of his blouse against the cold.

"Professor Barrow?" inquired the stocky man. "Isaac Barrow?"

"Yes, I'm Isaac Barrow," said the frail man at the door. "What is it you wish?"

The stocky man put his hand in the

pocket of his strange clothing, but the second, smaller of the two laid a hand gently on his elbow, and said, "Sorry to bother you, sir, but it is essential that we have the right man. You are Professor of Mathematics at Trinity College?"

"Yes, of course," said Barrow, irritated at the delay which kept him exposed to the cold. "Anyone could have told you that. Now please state your business quickly. This cold air is frightful!"

The stocky man said quietly, "Sorry Professor, but this is quite necessary." From his pocket he took a small shining weapon. Making no other sound than a light buzzing, the weapon discharged a thin line of light into Isaac Barrow's chest. As the man slumped, the two strangers moved quickly forward, carrying the lifeless body backward into the house.

They laid the corpse of Isaac Barrow gently on the floor before the fireplace, and paused, looking down at the pale, kind features with compassion. "I hope to God we're right," said the



The weapon discharged a thin line of light into Isaac Barrow's chest.



small man fervently. "I just hope we're right."

It was the cold month of January, in the year 1662.

Isaac Barrow's clothing fitted the small man perfectly. It took very little cosmetic alteration to make their faces identical.

"O.K.," said the stocky man, whose name was Linder. "Now you're Barrow." He wiped the last traces of makeup from his hands.

The new Isaac Barrow touched his cheeks tentatively with the tips of his fingers. "You're sure it's all right?"

"Perfect," said Linder with satisfaction. "His own mother couldn't tell; it's your problem from here on in."

"Lord knows I should be able to act the part," mused the small man. "I already feel more like Isaac Barrow than myself, after all that hypnostudy."

The stocky man consulted a sheaf of papers. "You meet a class tomorrow morning at ten-thirty," he said.

"Will—" Barrow hesitated, "will—the young man be there?"

"According to this schedule," replied Linder.

"I wish I had a little more time."

"It'll be all right," Linder said. "They don't, or rather, *you* don't know each other at all well. Your biggest problem will be running the class without making any mistakes."

**C**LASS TIME went smoothly, and the new Isaac Barrow made no mistakes. During the lecture, Barrow's eyes were inexorably drawn to a pasty-faced, sulky youth at the back of the hall. When the class was dismissed, he stopped the boy on his way out.

"Mr. Newton," he said, trying to keep his voice even, "I should like to have a private conference with you. Can you call at my home this evening?"

In a whining, sullen voice the boy

protested, "What did I do? I didn't do anything wrong, why are you picking on me?"

"Quite the contrary," said Barrow. "I'm quite pleased with your work, which is precisely why I should like to speak to you of certain matters."

Finally the boy agreed, complaining that the visit would take him into the night air, which he abhorred. He made it clear that he was complying solely out of respect for the Professor, and through no desire of his own.

When Barrow reached home, he slumped into a chair, gazing listlessly at the toes of his unfamiliar shoes.

"How'd it go?" asked Linder.

"All right, I guess," said Barrow without enthusiasm. "He's coming here this evening."

"Good," said Linder with satisfaction. "I'll struggle into some appropriate clothes."

As he turned to leave, Barrow said suddenly, "Linder, you know something? Just this minute I realized what an impossible undertaking this is. To manipulate a human being, in all his incredible complexity, for ten, twenty years, however long it takes."

Linder shrugged. "We knew that when we started. If we can't do it with the kind of training we've had, it can't be done."

"Knew it in our heads, maybe," said Barrow, "but I only just now got it in my belly. And you know something else? Isaac Newton is a weak, resentful, punk kid! It's going to be one hell of a job."

"Yes," said Barrow, looking steadily at the boy sitting sullenly across from him. "I've been much pleased by your development over the past two years since you entered the University. So pleased, in fact, that I have resolved to ask your assistance with some projects of my own. I understand you have some considerable interest in the Arts."



Newton stirred nervously. His preoccupation with alchemy and occultism had been the source of many jibes from his classmates.

"Damned busybodies," he muttered half under his breath. "Never tell anybody anything again." It was the first of many such promises Barrow was to hear him make, and break as readily.

"I'm afraid you misunderstand me, Mr. Newton," said Barrow. "The Hermetic Arts are a matter of great interest to me, also. It is with alchemical experiments that I would like you to assist me."

The boy looked up in surprise. "You? But you—I mean, well—"

Barrow laughed reassuringly. "My interest is not exactly what one would call public. Such an interest is, shall we say, not highly regarded in reactionary academic circles. Lead to embarrassment, eh? Ridicule, that sort of thing, from idiots you know."

NEWTON'S YOUNG, unpleasant face had lost its sullenness, and he was looking eagerly at Barrow. "Yes! Yes, I know very well, Sir."

"Fine!" said Barrow. "We understand each other then, eh? What goes on between us will be confidential? Fine! I knew I'd not mistaken my man; we'll get along famously, eh? And who knows? Together we may even produce something that the world will remember us by."

Newton had rapidly grown excited, with the impulsive, undisciplined excitement of the adolescent, and all he could manage by way of reply was a strangled affirmative.

"Now, the line I've been working on," said Barrow, adopting a confidential tone, "is this: since the difficulty of establishing spiritual control over reactions has been unhappily demonstrated, it would well behoove us to concentrate on the physical properties of the immortal metals, eh? Much remains to be done, and sound experiment is a good way to start. Supposing we have mercury, here, combining both

male and female aspects—the androgynous element. Now, vaporization of the mercury releases the fugitive female aspect, and leaves the stable. . ."

They talked until past midnight. The Transmutation of metals, the making of philosopher's gold, the planets—there was little that passed their notice. Barrow always insisted upon the physical, the experimental; and if experiment were not directly possible, he emphasized the necessity for a coherent mathematical proof. When Newton left the old professor's house, the truculence in his face had gone, and been replaced by the glow of great pleasure in mental activity.

Barrow had made a friend; that much was certain. Less certain was how long the friendship would last, considering the boy's erratic temperament. Still less certain was the direction of his thought.

It would not be easy to direct his mind to the necessary problems. There was his innate instability, not entirely explained by his twenty-year age; he would have to be weaned from superstition, occultism, and the metaphysical theology so important to him. But slowly. Very slowly. There was time to go slowly. All the time in the world, thought Barrow, all the time in the world.

"WHAT I overheard sounded pretty good," said Linder when the young Newton had gone.

"It was," said Barrow tiredly. "Better than I could reasonably expect; I only wish we didn't have such a blooming neurotic to work with."

"Historically speaking, he was the only logical choice," said Linder. "Newton came so close to so many things, and missed them all by a hair. Unfortunately, his near-misses set science off on the wrong track for two hundred years.

"Just consider it, Barrow. If Newton's optic experiments had been more sound, we would have had the whole

science of spectroscopy, a hundred and fifty years sooner. If his elements of the calculus had been worked out more carefully, our theoretical work would have been jumped forward two whole centuries. By the nineteenth century, instead of Meckler *discovering* the calculus, he would be *using* it, with two hundred years worth of refinements. What that man could have done if he'd had the calculus!"

"I know, I know," said Barrow. "But suppose this little project works, then where are we? Suppose the calculus goes ahead, and the optics, and the mechanics, and all the rest. How can we be sure it'll do our own time any good?"

"No answer to that," shrugged Linder. "Our race are good technicians, Barrow, and we've made a lot of progress. But we're weak on theory; we need these intellectual tools to work with. Power is a complex problem. If we are to find new sources of power, we've got to have the tools to go looking for it with. With a two hundred year boost in theoretical knowledge, we'd have a lot better chance."

"The pitiful thing," mused Barrow, "is that if we'd used a little common sense, the natural power would have lasted for centuries. Trying to change the course of history is a little too dangerous for comfort. And it might not even have been necessary."

"Sure," said Linder. "Our hindsight's real sharp. But the fact is that our foresight *wasn't* so sharp; we didn't use that little common sense, and now we've got our collective backs to the wall. We're retreating, Barrow; civilization is shrinking back, simply because we haven't the power to sustain our expansion. We can't keep all the lights lit; we can't keep all the motors running; and the cities are dying at the edges. I don't think there's an active suburban area left in the country. All the fringe areas are abandoned now, because there isn't power to feed

them. We're cutting too far back, beyond the bare minimum."

"If it works, you know, it won't really be our world any more; it'll be something else. For all we know, you and I may not even exist in that world."

"Could be," shrugged Linder. "There are a lot of things we don't know, but this is a last ditch attempt. Everything else has bogged down, and the scientists are sitting around counting their fingers. You don't think they would have wasted the power drain here unless they'd exhausted everything else, do you? The power drain to operate the machine was terrific. I'm told that every city in the hemisphere will be blacked out for a week."

"You're right, I suppose," said Barrow. "I suppose the theory is that things couldn't be any worse, and they might get better."

"I think that's exactly it," said Linder. "We don't *know* that it'll help, but there's at least a chance. And that's better than we've got on any other line."

"World savers," mused Barrow. "Eden builders. I don't much feel like a saver of civilization, do you? So now we spend the next ten or twenty years of our lives herding a bright young kid in the right direction, on the off-chance that it'll help our own world. And we can't even go home when we're done."

"You worry too much," said Linder. "Maybe we can't change the course of things, anyway. Well...we've got a job to do, so let's do it."

"I suppose you're right," said Barrow. "Don't mind me; I'm a worrywart from way back." He yawned. "Well, tomorrow's another day, my friend, and I've got classes to meet, so..." He went up the dark stairs slowly, and to bed in the cold, damp bedroom that was his until he finished his job.

A WARM SUMMER came and passed, almost unnoticed by Bar-

row and Newton. The two worked long into every night in Barrow's rough laboratory, evaporating, distilling, mixing. When their experiment had finished, they would talk, as well as while they were waiting for some development. They consulted Valentine's "*Azoth des Philosophes*", they pored together over the Arab Geber's "*Book of Mercury*", and "*Book of Scales*," and "*Book of Concentration*." Between them grew a strong bond of affection, built on the foundation of their mutual interest.

Barrow had been thoroughly trained in the Hermetic precepts before his assignment, for Newton's interest was historically well known. But as they rambled down the winding dead-end alleys of the Art, Barrow began to see it with new, younger eyes. He found excitement sparked by the young man's excitement; and, if he found nothing of physical value, he was granted insights into the workings of the human mind in its scrambling to understand the world. And always he guided their probing toward his own end.

He found the young Newton no less truculent that before, but learner<sup>d</sup> to deal with his unstable, demanding temperament. There was no doubt of the young man's brilliance. He seemed to have that rare faculty, so essential to creative work—an intuitive grasp of wholes, an ability to perceive the relations between superficially unrelated facts. What was lacking was not capability, but direction.

Newton was obstinately convinced that the answers to their physical questions lay in the territory of the occult. Man's feeble mind, he felt, could not grasp the truths they sought without magical, outside assistance. He was not to be swayed directly, nor guided openly; but subtle suggestion he absorbed as a sponge sucks up water. His eye was keen, his imaginative faculty incredibly sharp. A chance combination of elements would suggest an experiment to him, and Barrow used this

suggestibility to channel the boy's interest.

He could place, say, a bottle of sal ammoniac together with a dish of mercury, arranged so the afternoon sun through the cracks of the drapes would shine on them, and make them glitter. Invariably, Newton's eye would catch the sparkle, and sometimes he would immediately lose himself in thought. Sometimes, results would not show for several days, but inevitably he would then suggest some experiment with sal ammoniac and mercury. In this way, Barrow gradually turned the boy's mind into predetermined areas, and the trappings of occultism dropped away, one by one.

**N**EWTON'S PERSONAL characteristics did not change. He remained stubborn, attention demanding, and erratic. He had a profound suspicion of Authority, and conversely, an abnormal respect for it. He had never known the strong guiding hand of a father; his own had died three months before the boy's birth. At the age of two, young Isaac had been turned over to his grandmother for rearing, and it had been a lonely life. In those years after the bitter civil war, raiding and plundering parties still common in the country, and the child had lived in terror of these. His early memories, perhaps distorted, were all of fear and hiding and insecurity. Finding no sympathy in his grandmother, and none from the hired hands on the farm where he lived, he had turned within himself for solace.

When he was fourteen, his mother again received him into her home. Her second husband had died, and Newton felt strongly that he had been taken back because he would no longer be such an interference in his mother's life. By that time, certain patterns were already set: His moodiness, his almost trance-like states of deep thought when he seemed to retreat entirely from the world around him.

He had no friends, nor did he want them. He developed mannerisms of alienation, he whined and complained. He felt put upon, and reacted violently to criticism. A suggestion that his results were inaccurate, or his interpretation misleading, would be met with a temper tantrum; Barrow quickly learned the subtleties of phrasing necessary to criticize without antagonizing. To the boy, any adverse comment was not a criticism of Newton's work, but a direct personal attack. His ego lived in his work, and it was his only satisfaction.

Still, between the two men existed that unique human tropism we inadequately label 'friendship.' Newton found in Barrow a companion with whom to attack the dark walls surrounding knowledge. He found, though he did not realize it, a sympathy he badly needed; Barrow was a strong staff on which to lean. Whatever the time of day or night, whatever the problem, Barrow would listen patiently. The young man spilled all his insecurities, all his fears and misgivings into the willing hands of Barrow.

Barrow became to him father, teacher, and confessor. And one other thing, more important to Newton than anything else, Barrow became the unacknowledged source of ideas.

"Barrow," said the boy one day, "I find it strange, you know, but I think better working with you."

"Oh?" said Barrow, preoccupied with an experiment.

"Yes, it's rather odd," mused the boy. "There is a clarity to my thought not present at other times. You act like a precipitating agent, clearing the murky fluid of my mind. Do you notice anything of the same sort?"

Barrow stood from the bench, suddenly wary. It would not do for Newton to discover the nature of their co-operation. "Well," he said carefully, "not in you. I think you would do the same under any circumstances. I must confess, however, that in watching

your own brilliant grasp of relations, I find myself spurred on."

Newton glowed at the praise. He was easily flattered; the one area in which his perceptiveness did not operate was that of his own ego. However gross and transparent the flattery, he accepted it with satisfaction as his due. "Yes," he said, "perhaps that may be it after all." And no more was said for that time.

Barrow, for his part, found a great personal satisfaction in the development of the boy's quick mind. He enjoyed the role of mentor, and his remarkable success with Newton evidenced that he was well suited to his part.

A year passed quickly, and another.

In December, 1664, two Frenchmen died in a house at the end of Drury Lane. Their friends and neighbors covered the affair over as well as they could, but the news leaked out.

**BY THE MIDDLE** of January, 1665, one word held all of London by the throat. Plague. During the week of January 17-24, 474 persons were buried, and panic began.

Linder, who had been posing as the professor's manservant, and Barrow himself, were taken by surprise.

"My God, Barrow," said Linder, "this sickness is getting out of hand! The carnage out there is unbelievable, and it's getting worse! Every Bill shows an increase!"

Barrow was sitting before the fire, staring disconsolately at the flames. "I know. Cambridge is talking of closing it's doors."

"What the hell is going on, man?" asked Linder desperately. "If this continues, London will be decimated in six months. Surely a disaster of this magnitude couldn't be lost to history!"

"It would seem unlikely," admitted Barrow wryly. "Of course, it would depend on what history you read."

"Nonsense! This isn't a matter of

interpretation, it's a matter of physical fact. Any historian would record it."

"That isn't what I meant," said Barrow quietly. "What do you know about the origin of the Plague?"

"Just common knowledge," Linder replied. "There were reports in outlying districts a while back, but it wasn't anything serious. What are you getting at?"

"Where were the first deaths?" asked Barrow.

Linder was suddenly silent, an expression of shock growing on his face. He let his breath out explosively. "St. Giles parish. Where we arrived."

"Yes," said Barrow. "Where we arrived."

"Then we brought it."

"It seems reasonable, doesn't it?" replied Barrow. "History records no plague in 1665, but there is one; and it began where we entered the city. What's the obvious conclusion?"

Linder slumped into a chair. "So history can be changed after all. Now we know."

"I wonder," said Barrow, "if the knowledge is worth the price."

The two time travelers sat quiet for a moment, until Linder asked, "What about Newton?"

"I've been thinking about that," replied Barrow. The boy's about ready. The ground's been plowed, so to speak, and it's time to sow the seeds. But he can't remain in London; we'll have to send him up to Lincolnshire, to his home at Woolthorpe. He can work there. I'll go up with him to see it through."

"What about the danger of infection?" asked Linder.

Barrow shrugged. "If he's going to be infected with something we brought, he probably already is. Whether he is or not, speed is the essential thing. We've got to get that work done, and I'll have to be there to be certain it does."

"All right," said Linder. "I'll make arrangements to leave the city."

**ISAAC NEWTON:** *In the beginning of the year 1665 I found the method for approximating series and the rule for reducing any dignity of any binomial to such a series...*

"Isaac, suppose we take the binomial expression  $(a+b)$ , and allow it a dignity of 3." Barrow quickly wrote  $(a+b)^3$  on the sheet of paper. "Now, does it not seem reasonable that we could reduce..."

*...The same year in May I found the method of tangents of Gregory and Slusius...*

"Isaac, this is too difficult for my old brain. I haven't been able to do anything with it. I wonder if, just as a favor to me, you'd give it a try?"

*...and in November discovered direct method of Fluxions...*

"Now, if we assume that motion is an endless succession of infinitely diminishing increments—does that suggest anything to you, Isaac?"

*...and in November discovered the Theory of Colours...*

"Barrow," said Newton, "You're making me nervous, fiddling with that thing. What is it?"

"Just an ordinary glass prism I made, Isaac. I'm sorry it bothers you, but I find it rather interesting. You notice how a beam of white light is changed into a colored bank like a rainbow? And passing the colored light through another prism, it returns to white. Amusing, eh?"

"I wonder," said the young man. "Now, if white light were actually a combination of all colors... Here, let me see that prism."

"Certainly, Isaac," said Barrow, "Certainly. Here it is."

*...and in May following I had entrance into the inverse method of Fluxions...*

"Now assuming the reverse of your brilliant work of Fluxions, that is to say, an ever increasing series of increments, you could represent the sum of

these increments by an S, thus, S, and move..."

*...and in the same year I began to think of gravity extending to the orb of the moon...and having thereby compared the force requisite to keep the Moon in her orb with the force of gravity at the surface of the earth, and found them to answer pretty nearly...*

"Barrow, it simply won't work unless we assume that the force of gravity is concentrated in the earth's center."

"But Isaac, if we postulate that the earth is made up of an infinite number of small volumes, each exerting its own attraction, I think we might find..."

THE TWO returned to London after three years in Woolsthorpe. Barrow promptly relinquished his professorship in favor of his young friend, and Newton was, at 26, highly enough placed in the academic world to pursue his own studies "independently." He found that he was still able to "think more clearly" in Barrow's presence, and they continued to work together.

Newton noticed, during their experiments in optics, the similarity of the prismatic band to the chromatic aberration of a refracting telescope lens. He therefore devised, with Barrow's assistance, a telescope working by reflection, rather than refraction, and submitted a small version to the Royal Society, at Barrow's urging. As a result of this telescope, the young man, now 30, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, its youngest member.

"Isaac," said Barrow. "You are now a Fellow of the Royal Society. It's time you published some of your work. It isn't fair to deprive the world of science of your achievement."

"Perhaps," said Newton. "I must admit, I had been considering it. But I have done so much. What should I publish?"

"Well, now," said Barrow. "It was a philosophic discovery of the first rank that led to your developing the

telescope for which you were elected. Why not allow the Royal Society the benefits of your philosophic work, rather than merely its mechanical fruits?"

"Yes," said Newton. "Yes. Perhaps that would be most appropriate. That's what I shall do, then!"

In the *Philosophical Transactions* of February 19, 1672, there appeared a letter to the Society from Mr. Isaac Newton, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge. It contained a revolutionary theory of light, and it began:

"Sir,

*To perform my late promise to you, I shall without further ceremony acquaint you, that in the beginning of the year 1666 (at which time I applied myself to the grinding of optic glasses of other figures than spherical) I procured me a triangular glass-prism, to try therewith the celebrated phenomena of Colours...*

From this paper, the young man expected universal applause. The new theory of color, based on specific indices of refraction, was a magnificent achievement. But it was not uniformly appreciated as such.

Newton burst into Barrow's home, his face purpling with rage, his voice harsh and shrill. "Look! Look at this!" he shouted, waving a sheaf of papers.

"Isaac, be calm man," said Barrow. "What has you so distraught?"

Newton was inarticulate with fury. He sputtered ineffectually and threw himself into a chair, mutely thrusting the papers to Barrow.

They were letters, Barrow saw, addressed to the Royal Society and objecting strongly to Newton's paper. Some of the names Barrow did not know; others were from men of great ability. The top level of English science. Robert Hooke, Father Pardies, Christian Huygens. All disputing Newton's conclusions vigorously.

Newton was slumped in the chair, muttering viciously. "I will never publish again. Never! Huygens, Hookel

Fools, all of them, damned ignorant fools!"

BARROW looked at him, thinking of their first meeting so long ago, when a white-faced insecure adolescent promised "never to tell anybody anything again."

*How little is the man different from the boy*, thought Barrow. Even Newton's voice had resumed its old querulousness, the irritating whine. Barrow thought irrelevantly of how a man in stress will revert to his native tongue.

"They've no right to challenge me!" growled Newton. "Me! Isaac Newton! I've done more for the world than they ever shall! And they dare to challenge my conclusions! Jealous swine!"

Barrow wondered briefly how much he would have done for the world if he had been allowed to concentrate his sharp mind on his evaporating mercury and occult spells.

"Now, Isaac," he said quietly, "You mustn't let this upset you so. These men have not your grasp of problems, they are as blind men compared to you. You must not expect them to be able to follow your genius completely. You must be fair."

"Fair! They are fools, all! Don't speak to me of fairness."

"Isaac, it seems to me the least you could do is try to explain to these men their error. Write them, explain to them."

"Rather would I write to hogs in the pen! I'll not write them, nor anyone. I'll not publish again, and that is my solemn promise!"

"Well then," sighed Barrow. "If you won't, then I shall. These men have a right to know of your work, and be convinced of it."

"Waste of your time," muttered Newton, lapsing into a sulky silence. But he did not forbid it. While his dignity did not allow him to write, he desperately wanted the men of his time to respect him, and honor his work.

And so Isaac Barrow patiently

wrote, answering the objections of each in turn, and signing the letters with Newton's name. He succeeded in convincing only one, Father Pardies. Newton refused to read the letters, or have anything more to do with the matter. He was deeply wounded by his disappointment, and retreated within himself for protection.

He seemed to feel that, somehow, even Barrow had turned against him, and his visits to the professor became less and less frequent, until they ceased altogether.

He kept by his promise not to publish. During the next years, he withdrew from the public eye, and secluded himself. His moodiness was more intense than ever now. He knew, after breaking with Barrow, how much he needed the older man, but refused to seek him out. Barrow had hurt him, in his own thinking, and he was not to be trusted. There was no one he could trust, for all were jealous of his ability. He worked alone, solitary, entrusting no one with his papers, publishing nothing, communicating nothing. And this silence endured for twelve years.

ONE DAY in 1684, Barrow said, "Linder, we are failing. We have been here, my God! how long? Twenty-two years. So much time gone, so much time. Newton is not going to come out of his hole, now; he is too deeply buried and secure. He must somehow be forced into publishing his work. Our job is finished, in the main, but it does us no good if it is not published, and read."

"Agreed," said Linder. "But how do you approach an ill-tempered bear who has hibernated for twelve years?"

"He has a great stubbornness, that man," said Barrow; "but basically he is the same insecure, applause-loving child he was when we met him. He needs recognition, he demands it, but he cannot go back on his word this time. There must be a sufficiently moving reason to publish, something to



override his ungodly pride. But what? That's our problem."

He paused. "Problem," he repeated, "Problem. Some problem so interesting that he can't refuse to work on it. That's it!"

"What's it?" asked Linder.

"Halley," said Barrow excitedly. "Edmund Halley, the astronomer!"

"Halley and Hooke have figured that the gravitational force must vary inversely as the square of the distance, in order to explain observed planetary motions. But they haven't been able to prove it. Newton can, I'm certain of that! If we could get Halley to work with us, and go to Newton himself..."

"Pretty tough," said Linder.

"Hypnotreatments."

"That's awfully risky," objected Linder. "Neither of us skilled enough to do a thorough job of it."

"It won't have to be thorough," said Barrow. "All we have to do is give Halley the conviction that only Newton can solve his problem, and we've got it!"

And so Edmund Halley went to Newton in 1684, and asked him what would be the curve of planets, if gravity varied inversely to the square of the distance.

"An ellipse, of course," Newton replied.

How did he know?

"I have calculated it."

Halley excitedly demanded to see the calculations. Newton had misplaced them, but he promised to write out the equations for Halley. He had been enormously pleased at Halley's request. It meant that, for once, the world was giving him the recognition he deserved. As he wrote out the theorems and equations for the astronomer, he reflected on his long standing-decision not to publish his work. Perhaps, he thought, he had a duty to mankind to publish. In this Halley upheld him, and even offered to pay for

the publishing from his own pocket. The money, though Halley himself did not realize it, would come from Barrow.

**BARROW AND LINDER** were elated as the project neared its end. It began to look as if they were to win out after all. The many years of patient, hard work, the years of waiting through Newton's reluctance and stubbornness were going to redeem themselves. With the publication of the work, the years of waiting through Newton's reluctance and stubbornness were going to redeem themselves. With the publication of the work, to be called "*Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica*," their task would be finished. The "*Principia*" was to contain all the work and further expansion done in those miraculous months at Woolsthorpe. They could relax; for the first time in over twenty years, they would be men simply living. Living peaceably, with no great Mission hanging over them like a leaden cloud. The hidden duties would be done, the worries, the burden of being world-savers.

"Do you think it'll work Barrow?" asked Linder. "Do you really think that what we've done will give our own time the power sources it needs?"

"I don't know," said Barrow. "We probably never will know. It may turn the earth into an Eden. Man may discover some force so much more powerful than electricity as to be inconceivable. I don't know; and to be honest, I'm not sure I care. We've had a reasonably content life here, you know—even with the Plague, and the troubles and all. There are many worse places to live than 17th century England. Frankly, I can't work up too much regret that we can't go back to our own time."

"Pretty much my feelings," agreed Linder. "We've been here nearly as long as we were in our own time, anyway. I'm afraid it wouldn't be much like going home, after this long."

"No," said Barrow. "I think it's probably just as well this way."

And both men were silent, spending in their minds the years ahead of them in England, pleasant years, with no worlds to save.

On the day the "*principia*" was published, Isaac Barrow and his manservant Linder disappeared from the earth, as if they had never existed.

Newton came to the old familiar many-gabled house, to share with his long-time mentor the pleasure of the publication. He found the house empty; nothing within the house gave him any hint. He enquired about the neighborhood, he found no answer. The men had been seen entering their home, in particularly cheerful moods. They were not there now. They had gone, but no one knew where.

Newton returned to that house many

times in the years to follow, but Linder and Barrow did not return.

He grew querulous again, slipping easily into his old habits. He wrote violently abusive letters to his friends, and followed them with profound apologies. He found he could not sleep at night. He quarreled bitterly with his colleagues, over nothing. He was like a man whose inner core of strength had been snatched from him. Shortly after publication of the "*Principia*", he suffered a near complete breakdown, after which, he wrote, he had never recovered the 'former consistency of his mind.'

"I am very tired," he said one day to an assistant. "Very tired. But the world of science must have my work, and it is not yet complete. Now, if evaporation of mercury releases the fugitive female element, and retains..."

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# AXIOMS FOR EVERYBODY

**by Isaac Asimov**

(author of "The Last Question")

**T**HERE ARE two ideas that a great many people have about axioms, and both of them happen to be wrong.

The ideas are 1) That an axiom is "a self-evident truth" and 2) That if you could disprove a basic axiom, the foundations of the universe would crumble.

But it so happens that 1) Despite the fact that the definition, "a self-evident truth" occurs in dictionaries, an axiom has nothing necessarily to do with truth, and is hardly ever self-evident; and 2) If you could disprove an axiom, the universe wouldn't care a

bit—not a bit. Axioms are disproved every day.

First, what about this "self-evident" business? I'll give you a self-evident statement! "The Earth is a little uneven, what with mountains and valley, but on the average, it's flat."

You may not believe that, because you've been told different, but just look about you and go by what's self-evident. (Heck, if the earth were round, for instance, the Australians would be walking on their heads, and you know they're not doing that.)

Here's another example of a self-evident statement: "The moon and the

sun are just about the same size." They *aren't*? If you've ever seen a picture of a total eclipse, you'd know the moon can be super-imposed neatly on the sun, and there is no better way of proving equality than by superimposition. If you know a better one, tell me. Don't just tell me, either; tell Euclid, because superimposition is what *he* uses.

Well, we all agree that something which is true need not be self-evident. Apparently we ought also to agree that something which is self-evident need not be true. I have already shown that a very respectable axiom is sometimes not true; I shall yet show you that respectable axioms may be anything but self-evident.

If you please, I would like to give you an alternate definition of an axiom, as follows: "An axiom is any statement which is accepted at face-value simply as a basis on which to construct an argument."

Every time a fiction writer writes a story, he starts off with a set of axioms. One of them might be: "Suppose Martians invade the Earth."

Sure, they haven't, but *suppose!* What happens *if*?

An axiom is just something to argue from. One of the reasons so many arguments go nowhere, is that the opposing arguers don't start with the same axioms.

Of course, in matters as complex as writing a story, you need a great many axioms. You not only must suppose the Martians invade; you must suppose a particular appearance, and particular characteristics, for them; as well as particular characteristics for each individual person in the story—and a number of other things.

In a relatively simple thing, like science, the axioms are fewer and simpler.

**WHEN** CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY wanted to work up the structure of the universe, he started off with a few simple axioms:

- 1- Heavenly motions are perfect,
- 2- The perfect curve is a circle,
- 3- The earth is motionless, and is the center of the universe.

He didn't try to prove these statements. If he had proved them, they would have been theorems based on still more fundamental axioms. But he *didn't* prove them; they were "self-evident truths". Look about you: Isn't the earth motionless? Isn't the earth right spang in the middle of the universe? Now look at the circle. Isn't it a perfect curve? See how smooth and even it is, and think about heavenly motions. Do you expect them to be *imperfect*?

Well, then, on the basis of these axioms, Ptolemy built up a structure of the universe which later astronomers improved on. It was the planets that were a little troublesome, because they had a curiously uneven motion. Mercury and Venus never moved farther than so many degrees from the sun; the other planets occasionally shifted the direction of motion.

In order to explain these planetary movements, it was necessary to suppose that the planets moved in combinations of circles. That is, they moved in a small circle, and the center of that circle moved in a circle about the earth.

As planetary observations grew more accurate, the circles about circles about circles grew more and more complicated; by the time Copernicus came along there were seventy-odd sets of circles.

Copernicus decided to change axiom 3 and leave axioms 1 and 2. He made axiom 3 read something like this: The sun is motionless, and is the center of the planetary system which includes Earth, and the stars are at an infinite distance.

Now Copernicus couldn't prove that statement. He couldn't get off at a distance and look to see whether the Earth moved or the sun did. He only assumed it as a basis of argument, and

waited to judge its value from the kind of an argument resulted.

It had to be a good argument because Copernicus' axiom was nowhere near as good as Ptolemy's. Ptolemy's was self-evident; Copernicus' was not. The sun stands still? By Godfrey, sir, you can see it move.

But when Copernicus got through constructing *his* solar system, the number of circles within circles had decreased to thirty-odd. Well, that made things simpler, so Copernicus' axiom stood. Who cares whether it is true or not? It makes things *simpler*.

Then Kepler came along; he dropped Ptolemy axioms 1 and 2 and replaced them with a new axiom: "Planets move about the sun in elliptical orbits, with the sun at one of the foci of the ellipse."

Again the new axiom is a step backward. After all a circle sounds reasonable; it is such a simple curve. But why an ellipse? If we're going to get into fancy curves, why not a figure-eight? Why not a cycloid? Why not a double wing-back somersault?

Why not indeed? Only when Kepler's axiom was tried out, all the circles within circles disappeared.

Then Newton came along and said: "Objects attract one another in direct proportion to the product of their masses and in inverse proportion to the square of the distance between them."

Newton didn't prove that; he *assumed* it. It happened to fit the data he knew about, and it was an advance—because if the "Law of Gravity" (really an axiom) was accepted, then the axioms of Kepler and Copernicus could be proved from the Law of Gravity and became theorems.

Newton's axiom wasn't the last word, either. Mercury, for instance, does not obey the Law of Gravity in every particular; in order to account for that (and a few other things), Einstein had to advance a new set of axioms.

Now do you suppose that every time some human beings decided to change the axioms on which they reasoned out the structure of the universe, that the structure of the universe changed? Do you think that a mass of uranium 235 above the critical mass would not have gone *blooie* in 1903 before Einstein came out with  $e=mc^2$ ? Do you think that if someone proved the statement  $e=mc^2$  was wrong, that atom bombs would stop going *blooie*?

No! The universe exists in complete indifference to the human mind, and axioms are only creatures of the human imagination, designed not to dictate to the universe what it ought to do, but to help our own minds get a glimmering of what the universe is.

WHEN ONE axiom is replaced by another, it doesn't invalidate the things that were *adequately* explained by the old axiom; it still explains them adequately. In addition, the new axiom covers additional matters which were explained *inadequately* by the old axiom, and explains them adequately.

In brief, when you "disprove" an axiom, you are not "disproving" facts; you are only "disproving" explanations.

(Some interesting science fiction stories have been written on the assumption that new equations mean a new universe. Consider Lewis Padgett's "Fairly Chessmen".)

Consider thermodynamics. A hundred eighty years ago, the French chemist, Lavoisier, ran a few experiments and decided that: "Matter can neither be created nor destroyed." This is called the Law of Conversation of Matter.

Is that self-evident? Have you ever seen a burning candle? Oh, well, you say, the candle combines with oxygen and turns into gases. But that is not self-evident; it took thousands of years for mankind to discover that gases ex-

isted. And then, suppose the candle does turn into gas—are you sure that *all* of it turns into gas, that not a *single* atom is destroyed in the process. Maybe just one. Or maybe just one atom is created by accident. Are you *sure*?

Chemists weren't. They measured and measured and measured; finally they decided the Lavoisier axiom would do—it certainly explained a lot of things—so let it go. Accept it.

About fifty years after Lavoisier, the German physicist, Helmholtz, made up the axiom, "Energy can neither be created nor destroyed." This is the Law of Conservation of Energy. It was never proven, but just accepted.

Well, in the 1890's, radioactivity was discovered—and it was suddenly borne in upon an appalled world of science that energy was being created out of nothing.

Do you suppose the universe tottered? Why should it? Nothing had happened to the universe; something had just happened to our explanations.

In 1905, Einstein put things back in shape by setting up the axiom that: "Matter and energy are quantitatively interconvertible". That meant that the energy produced by radioactive substances was created at the expense of a certain amount of destruction of matter. Now we could say, "*Mass-energy* can neither be created nor destroyed."

As a matter of fact, it was a good thing that our inadequate axiom concerning energy was broken, because a new, more adequate, axiom upset nothing that had been adequately explained earlier. It only introduced adequate explanation or what had been inadequately explained earlier—like the source of solar energy.

Do you suppose that the atom bomb *proves* Einstein's axiom? It doesn't—any more than watching the sun revolve about the Earth proves that the

sun revolves about the Earth. An axiom can only be proved by another more fundamental axiom, and a more fundamental axiom has not yet been advanced.

To be sure, an exploding atom bomb is an interesting demonstration that Einstein's axiom is a useful one and is more adequate than Helmholtz's axiom, but it isn't *proof*. No amount of observed data can prove an axiom, you see, since at any moment—at *any moment*—one piece of observed data can disprove an axiom and make a new one necessary.

As a matter of fact, in observing nuclear reactions, it turns out that in some cases part of the disappearing mass is turned into energy and the rest of the disappearing mass just—disappears! That disproved Einstein's axiom instantly, unless the scientists could make up an *ad hoc* argument to get round it. (An *ad hoc* argument is one designed to explain a single fact, and to have no application to anything else by which it might be tested.)

The scientists decided to *ad hoc* it. They invented a particle called the neutrino, with no charge, no mass, nothing that could be detected, and said, "That's what's carrying away the disappearing energy."

That saved Einstein's axiom but scientists weren't really happy about this solution. Last year, the neutrino was detected; scientists, by and large, drew a sigh of relief.

Actually, the sigh was not one of relief over the universe, but over their own poor minds, which would otherwise have been forced to account for the facts of the matter with new and better axioms.

OF COURSE, I can just hear all of you muttering, "What's Asimov giving us? When *we* talk of axioms, we talk of mathematical axioms, not of chemical and physical principles. Mathematical axioms are completely different."

Are they? In what way?

Are mathematical axioms more fundamental, more basic, more self-evident, more truthful than physical axioms?

Take the mathematical axiom: "The whole is equal to the sum of its parts." Do you find that more fundamental, basic, self-evident and truthful than "Matter and energy can be interchanged quantitatively."

Is a tree equal to the billion toothpicks into which it can be converted? If an orchestra played the notes of a symphony in random order, does that equal the symphony. (After all, the symphony is equal to the sum of its notes, isn't it?)

But you say, "No, no, the mathematical axiom doesn't apply to things like that. Only to magnitude."

Yet Einstein's axiom applies to all matter, with no exceptions. You don't have to pick and choose and say that the axiom applies to this but not to this.

Doesn't that make the physical axiom, if anything, *more* fundamental, basic and truthful than the mathematical axiom.

What about the matter of being self-evident? Surely the mathematical axiom is really self-evident, and the physical axiom is not.

Well, let's see. If the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, then a two-inch line has twice as many points in it as a one-inch line, if all the points are the same size. Or else, perhaps the two-inch line has points twice as large as the points in the one-inch line.

—Well, actually, no. When we talk about points and lines, the notion of transfinite numbers enters, and in transfinite numbers, the whole is not necessarily equal to the sum of the parts.

How about this. If you start from your house and travel five miles north, then five miles east, you are ten miles from home. Right?

—Well, not right. These things in-

volve vector sums and in vector sums, the whole is not necessarily equal to the sum of the parts.

If the axiom is going to be true sometimes, and not true other times, how can we say it's "self-evident." It looks as if you have to learn an awful lot of mathematics to know when to trust the self-evidentness of a mathematical axiom.

**H**OW ABOUT this mathematical axiom: "Two straight lines that are neither parallel nor coincident, if extended indefinitely, intersect in one and only one point?"

That's nowhere near as basic, fundamental, self-evident and true as a physical axiom. In fact, it's a downright lie. If you draw two straight lines that are neither coincident nor parallel on the surface of the Earth, and extend them indefinitely, they will cross at *two* points.

"Oh, well," you say, "the surface of the Earth is curved, and the axiom applies only to a plane. If you had a *plane* of indefinite extent, the axiom would be self-evident and true."

How do you know? Suppose you *did* have a plane of indefinite extent. How would you know what happens when a line is extended indefinitely? Do you propose to go and look? Suppose that a duodecillion light years away the two lines that had already intersected managed somehow to intersect again. Prove they wouldn't.

You can't. Mathematical axioms are just guesses and assumptions, no more respectable than physical axioms.

Now how about this: Do you suppose a physical axiom is made up after a number of observations or experiments have been made, and that it is deliberately designed to fit said observations and experiments? Do you suppose that mathematical axioms on the other hand, are the result of brilliant insight, and don't depend on ob-



servation but only on the fundamental properties of the universe?

I wonder. It is my opinion that all axioms are the result of prior observations. Take the one that goes: "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points." People looked at straight lines all the time—and at curves, too—and finally some geometer (a pre-Euclidean Greek, probably) decided that maybe a straight line was the shortest distance between two points. It looked as though it were the shortest. That's reasoning from observation. A simpler kind of observation, perhaps, but the difference is one of degree and not of kind.

Well, then what is the difference between mathematical axioms and any other kind of axiom?

My answer is: *none!*

What I have said about physical axioms, you can play more games the mathematical axioms. They, too, can be broken with impunity and have been; and again nothing has happened to the Universe, but only to our conception of the universe.

Of course, the thing about mathematics is that once you set up your with them than chemists and physicists can with theirs. The Greek geometers invented the chief game and called it deduction.

It involves reasoning from one thing to another. If A, B, and C are true, then D is true; if B and D are true, then E and F must be true; if A, C, and F are true, G just naturally has to be true; and so on.

But you have to start somewhere. If each statement you make has to be proved on the basis of a previous statement you've made, somewhere there has to be a first statement, or a first series of statements.

To play the game properly, you had to begin with as few statements axioms in this article also applies to as possible, and each statement had to be as simple as possible.

Euclid's great contribution to the history of thought was that he was the first, as far as we know, to play the game openly and above-board with all the chips on the table. He listed his axioms.

Now a list of axioms must be self-consistent. If two of your axioms prove two mutually exclusive things; then either the things are not really mutually exclusive, but only seem so—or else one of the offending axioms must be changed, or dropped altogether. It doesn't matter which of the two axioms, in such an instance.

Now Euclid's axioms are self-consistent—or, at least, no one has ever been able to show that they are not self-consistent (which may not be the same thing as saying they *are* self-consistent, of course.)

However, a good set of axioms also ought to be not redundant. That is, you don't want an axiom you can do without. You don't want an axiom you can prove by means of the other axioms, it isn't neat.

Well, Euclid has one famous axiom, number 5, that looks funny. The way he stated it, it was much more complicated in wording, and much less "self-evident" than any of the others. The simplest way I know of putting it is: "Through any point not on a given line, one and only one line, parallel to the given line, can be drawn."

**F**OR CENTURIES, geometers tried to prove the parallel line axiom from the other simpler-sounding axioms and couldn't. At one time, a certain mathematician decided to follow a systematic course of first supposing the axiom wasn't true, building a kind of "pseudo-geometry" about the remaining axioms with a distorted axiom number 5, waiting till he reached a contradiction, then saying "Well, we've reached a contradiction, which shows that we must keep axiom number 5 as is."

He set to work, progressing methodically from one progressing to the next. The propositions weren't the ones in Euclid—in fact, they sounded ridiculous if judged by common-sense; *but* he didn't reach a contradiction. He went on and on and didn't reach a contradiction.

*So he quit!*

He abandoned the project. I believe he was actually afraid to go on. Perhaps (who knows) he felt that if he proved that axiom number 5 was not necessary to geometry, all of Euclid would suddenly cease to be, and with it all the universe.

And so he was not the discoverer of non-Euclidean geometry.

But others followed him. The Russian, Lobachevski, substituted an axiom to the effect that through any point not on a given line, *any* number of lines parallel to the given line could be drawn, and built up a self-consistent geometry on that. It wasn't the same as Euclid's geometry, but why should it be? Lobachevski was playing the game from a different starting position.

Later, a German, Riemann, substituted the opposite axiom; that is, that through this point, *no lines at all* could be drawn parallel to a given line. Again there emerged a self-consistent geometry, different from the other two.

Well, then, the obvious question (I once asked it myself) is: which of these different geometries is *true*? Through that heaven-forsaken point you can either draw no parallel lines, or *one* parallel line, or *more than one* parallel line. It's got to be one of these. Which is it *really*?

The answer is: *none of them*. Nothing ain't necessarily so.

Each geometry is a faultless, self-consistent structure based on arbitrary axioms not having anything *necessarily* to do with truth and reality. It may happen that a certain type

of geometry (or other mathematical discipline) shows analogies to certain phenomena we see in reality. In that case, that type of geometry (or other mathematical discipline) becomes *useful*; but useful is not the same as true.

In our ordinary, everyday problems, Euclidean geometry happens to match real phenomena very nicely. In the neighborhood of large masses like the sun—or better, a dwarf star—Riemannian geometry matches better than Euclidean. There may be—conditions, either known about now or to be discovered later, where Lobachevskian geometry may match real phenomena better than the other two.

It is as though artists made objects out of wood, metal, and other substances, for no other reason than the fact that the objects appealed to their esthetic senses.

Walking through a display of such objects, you came across a beautifully-designed piece of wood and gleaming iron, which, for convenience we shall call an axe. You think, "Hey, just the thing to cut down that tree I wish were out of my way," grab the axe, rush out and cut down that tree.

Do you think that by inventing the axe our artist had invented the tree? The tree was always there. The axe was just a new tool to *handle* the tree. Moreover, if trees didn't exist, don't you think a well-designed axe would still be an object of beauty, well worth making for the sake of its beauty?

And what if you later came across another object, which we shall call a saw. It, too, can be used to cut down trees. Under some circumstances a saw is more useful for the purpose than an axe. Under other circumstances an axe is more useful.

Now which of these, the axe or the saw, is *true*?

Do you see my point?



# the Locus Focus

by **Richard Wilson**

(author of "One Man's Inch")



When the pile of pennies reached  
the driver's knee, he gave up.

(illustration by EMSH)

**Suddenly, everybody—but everybody—was resisting  
price increases and demanding their money back on  
money-back guarantees!**



# THE LOCUS FOCUS



by Richard Wilson

**H**AD I BEEN working, I'd have taken a cab and put it on the client's expense account—but I was between jobs, so I rode the bus. That's where I noticed the thin old fellow with the sunken eyes—on the uptown Broadway bus.

I was sitting up front. It was evening, well past the rush hour, and I was on my way home from my office south of Times Square to my hotel on 78th Street.

The thin old man got on near the Trans-Lux newsreel theater. "Fare still fifteen cents?" he asked the bus driver.

"That's right, mister. Till midnight."

I half watched, taking my eyes off my copy of *Time*. I'd read all of the magazine's authoritative week-old rehash of the news in the office except the science section, so I was looking at that—something about a new comet.

The old man chuckled and dropped a dime and a nickel into the fare box. "Then I'll save my pennies," he said, giving the driver a sly look. "My name's Radin," he said. "Lionel Radin."

"Welcome aboard, Mr. Radin," the driver replied cheerfully. "Watch the doors and step to the rear."

"I know all about it, young man," Mr. Radin said, "it's going the same way as the front of the bus."

"Right you are, Pop," the driver said. "You got it made." He swung expertly around a double-parked taxi and outbluffed a DeSoto.

Radin took the empty seat behind mine. He had glanced at me as he went by and I looked quickly down to my magazine, afraid he was going to sit next to me. I'd lost my place and so I reread *Time's* National Affairs

piece about that neo-blackshirt, General Stacy Tranquen. I read it doggedly because if there's anything I can do without it's garrulous old men—unless, of course, they're clients willing to pay me thirty dollars a day plus expenses.

I'm a confidential investigator, name of John Smith. The name usually gets a laugh but it's good for business, too. It's the anonymous kind of name that goes with the one-with-the-crowd personality a private shadow should have.

Maybe my job makes me more sensitive than most but after a while—it was near the Coliseum at Columbus Circle—I began to feel somebody's eyes boring into the back of my neck.

I felt that, then I thought: haircut. Need a trim. Have to maintain appearances between jobs. I turned around fast, and there was old Lionel Radin looking at me, bold as brass.

The eyes sunk deep in their sockets were gray. They weren't watery or vague, like some old men's, but—well, they were piercing. They looked right into me. "You need a haircut, Mr.—?" the old boy said.

It was the kind of half-senile, busybody remark any old gaffer might make, except that I had been thinking the same thing. I didn't show that anything had registered and supplied the name his question-marked "Mr." had asked for.

"Smith," I said. "John Smith."

It didn't get the usual laugh. "Radin's my name, Mr. Smith," he said. "Make a mental note. Everything fits. You'll see."

A crackpot, I turned back in time to catch the eye of the bus driver in his rear-view mirror. He winked. I grinned, tossed an "If you say so, Mr. Radin," over my shoulder, then

ostentatiously found my original place in *Time* and went back to reading about the comet.

"That, too," the old man said, looking over my shoulder. "A certain sense of concinnity will manifest itself."

"Sure," I said; when the bus reached 78th Street, I got off without a glance at him.

There's a newsstand near my hotel where I generally pick up a copy of the morning paper. I fished out a handful of change and separated four pennies from the rest. Andy, the newsboy—he was about 55—held out a copy of the *Daily News*, as usual. But when I gave him the money he said, "It's a nickel now, Smitty."

"The hell it is," I said. Ordinarily, I guess, I'd have paid the extra cent. I'm old enough to remember when the *News* was two cents and I'd never balked at a price increase before. But tonight I did. "The *Mirror*, too?"

"No; that's still four cents."

"Give me the *Mirror*, then."

Andy shrugged and handed me the other tabloid. "You ain't the first, Smitty."

**I** DIDN'T KNOW what he meant by that until the next day. I was going into my office, this time with a copy of *Newsweek*, but I never had a chance to read it. The phone was ringing when I walked in the door.

I answered it and I had a client. It was the bus company. I'd done work for them in the past, mostly checking up on cheating drivers. This time it was something else.

The company wasn't being cheated, as far as it knew. It was collecting its new eighteen-cent fare—I remembered the bus driver had said it was going into effect at midnight and I'd read about it in the *Mirror*—but every single bit of that eighteen cents was in pennies.

I listened, made notes, and agreed

to take the investigation. In my current circumstances I'd have agreed to find Judge Crater. When I hung up I turned on the office radio. That's where I first heard about the boycott of the *Daily News*.

The one-star final had come out, as usual, a little before eight p.m. The presses printed the myriads of copies and the delivery trucks, piloted by that crazy crew of would-be fire engine drivers, roared around Manhattan, tossing bundles off at the newsstands.

And there they lay—fifty here, seventy-five here, a hundred and twenty there. Like me, everybody bought the *Daily Mirror* instead.

The obvious explanation—that everybody had switched because the *News* had raised its price and the *Mirror* hadn't—was incredible. Would that make 2,109,601 addicted readers (guaranteed A.B.C. circulation) switch overnight from Dick Tracy to Joe Palooka? From Jimmy Powers to Dan Parker? From Ed Sullivan to Walter Winchell? As one of the brains that wrote letters to Vox Pop might say, not hardly.

Understandably, there was consternation in the *Daily News* skyscraper on East 42d Street. Contrariwise, there was jubilation three blocks away on 45th Street, where the *Mirror* made do in its less pretentious quarters. The *Mirror* doubled its press run, then tripled it.

The adaptable street vendors caught on quickly. They changed their chant from "*News a' Mirror*" to "*Getcha Mirror.*"

The *Daily News*, after consulting with that other victim of the public whim, the bus company, became my second client.

A bus company official, who seemed to be on the verge of sobs, filled me in on how its troubles had begun. At exactly one minute after midnight the penny deluge started.

For once in the history of riderdom nobody, but nobody, needed change. Everybody had the exact fare, in pennies—eighteen of them.

The fare boxes, regearred to sort and count pennies, nickels and dimes jammed; they couldn't digest the copper flood fast enough.

The bus drivers, human beings themselves for the most part, grinned at first at the riders' revenge. But with the jamming of the fare boxes they were forced to accept the coins by hand. All over town, buses halted at crazy angles while the drivers counted the pennies and cursingly tried to find room for them in their changemakers, their pockets, their upside down hats.

Driver Ralph Costerlocker of the Broadway line was one of many who just gave up. Ralph accepted, uncounted, whatever the riders gave him and threw the handfulls of pennies on the floor under his feet.

"I know," he said to one grinning passenger, "pennies is legal tender up to twenny-fi' cents. Okay, get in and move to the rear; this is a bus, not a vaudeville show."

But Ralph's valiant try came to an end in the middle of Columbus Circle. The pile of pennies was so deep by then that he could no longer work the brake and gas pedals.

Ralph—with whom the bus company started its dossier—cut the ignition, set the airbrakes and lit a cigaret. He turned to his passengers, and said: "This is as far as I go. Anybody wants their money back they can help theirselves. All I got to say is, the kids are sure gonna raise hell tomorrow about the great piggy bank robbery."

Ralph shook his feet loose from the pennies, propped them up on the jammed fare box and opened his *Daily Mirror*.

THE THING spread from there.

The *Mirror* had a full-page ad by a chewing gum manufacturer. (The *News* had the ad, too, but of course

nobody read it there.) An old established firm was marketing a new brand of gum—Supertang; it promised a tantalizing taste thrill. If you didn't agree—double your money back.

The advertising agency was confident that millions would try Supertang at a mere nickel a pack; it was cynical enough to believe that the number of people so dissatisfied that they'd trouble to mail back the unchewed four sticks for a lousy dime would be negligible.

But something was getting into people. What happened, of course, was that nobody—but *nobody*—was satisfied with Supertang. Millions bought five sticks, chewed one, spat it out and spent three cents to mail back the four sticks and demand ten cents.

Three million dimes came to three hundred thousand dollars, and the cost of addressing and mailing was just enough more to topple Supertang into bankruptcy.

I HAD TO get out of the office; the phone rang all the time. But it wasn't anybody new wanting to hire me; it was the same old clients demanding results. Yakking with them wasn't solving anything; it was wasting time.

I took one more call, hoping it was Supertang anxious to swell my clients to a trio; it was only the *Daily News* again, hysterically giving me the latest on the number of advertisers who had cancelled.

I fled to Bryant Park and sat down on a backless bench to recapitulate. This was Thursday. The boycott of the *Daily News* had begun on Tuesday night, about eight o'clock, with Wednesday's one-star final. It had continued all day and that night nobody bought the Thursday edition either. The fat *Sunday News* was only two days off—Saturday night would tell the story there. The Sunday edition was also boosting its price, from a dime to fifteen cents. They normally sold near-

ly four million copies of the Sunday paper—twice as many as on a weekday; no wonder they were getting panicky.

A young man sat down on my bench and said "Nice day." He looked like a clerk on his lunch hour. At first, I planned to ignore him and get on with my thinking, such as it was. Then I decided he might be a ready-made cross-section of the public, so I turned on a smile. I asked him if he read the *Daily News*.

"Funny thing," he said. "I used to, every day; but I just switched to the *Mirror*."

"How come?"

"Just got fed up. Every time you turn around, something else costs more. I just decided not to go along with it."

"I should think it'd be easier to hand over a nickel all in one piece instead of bothering with four pennies, or getting change."

"It's no bother." He grinned. "What is a bother is getting together thirty-six pennies every day for the bus."

*Aha*, I thought. Now we'd find out about the penny conspiracy, as the bus company was convinced it had to be.

"**WHO** TOLD you to do that?" I asked.

"Nobody; I just thought I'd get even with them. Remember when the fare was a nickel?"

"I do, but I shouldn't think you would."

"I had a childhood. Anyhow, like I said, it's just gone far enough, so I make sure I have enough pennies—eighteen in the morning and eighteen for at night. I take the Sixth Avenue bus up from the Village and the drivers are going crazy, poor guys. But it's the principle of the thing—nothing personal. Just like I tell them, pennies are legal tender up to a quarter."

I'd heard that before, and I was beginning to think every bus driver in town had, too. "Where do you get all the pennies?"

"You get them in change. You know. Then I work in a store—Vim's, down the street—and if I don't have enough I just ring up *No Sale* and make change for myself out of the cash register."

"Then it's just a game with you?" I was picking up his favorite adverb.

"Well, yeah, but it's a protest, too. You'd be surprised how many customers ask for pennies in change, for the same reason."

"Doesn't Vim run short of pennies that way?"

"We did at first; now we just get a couple thousand extra from the bank."

He reached in his pocket and took out a pack of gum. It was Supertang. He scowled at the four remaining sticks. "That lousy stuff," he said. "That reminds me, I was going to the post office and send it back to them."

"Double your money back, eh?"

"Why not? They make a promise, they ought to keep it." He put the Supertang away and brought out a pack of Spearmint. I took the stick he offered and watched him head for the post office, just a purposeful citizen armed with moral indignation and thirty-six pennies. If he was a conspirator I'd—well, I'd eat a whole pack of Supertang.

**I** HAD BOUGHT a pack of Marlboros at United Cigar and gave the clerk a fifty-cent piece. My change included nineteen pennies. I hadn't asked for them, and I looked at the clerk in surprise. He was grinning; he said: "They're handy to have. And why not try a pack of Supertang, sir? You can't lose."

I shrugged and pushed the odd nickel across the counter. I hadn't tasted Supertang and there was no reason to suppose I wouldn't like it. But I had the feeling that if I didn't, I'd be mailing back the four sticks and demanding a dime. They weren't going to push me around.

Outside the store I stopped to ana-



lyze this thought. *They* weren't going to push me around. Who was *they*? And what made me think anyone was trying to? Up to now, I'd never felt particularly put upon by unnamed *theys*, but now I was almost indignant, before I had even tasted the damn chewing gum.

So I tasted it. It was terrible.

I spat it into the gutter—a powerful spit, clear across the width of the sidewalk.

In my business, it's useful to carry a batch of stamped envelopes. I took one out on the spot and addressed it, using United Cigar's plate glass window for a desk. I enclosed the four sticks of Supertang, and a choice one-sentence note describing their product, and demanding a dime. Not until I'd dropped the envelope in the mail box on the corner did I stop to think why I'd done it.

I'm not normally an impulsive man; blindly obeying an impulse could be fatal in my trade. Therefore something external had got me riled up. But what? Or, to put it another way, who?

Who was influencing normally equable, acquiescent, put-upon, uncomplaining, suggestible people and turning them into good-humored but determined, grinning but implacable guardians of the extra pennies and nickels that they normally were separated from by the billions, years after inflationary year?

Having got to the who—and I was convinced there must be a *who*, now that it had happened to me—I wondered *how*. Telepathy? Pseudo-scientific bull. Mass suggestion through control of the human mind? I'd lived in the atomic age long enough not to dismiss this as completely improbable. Almost every time I read the science pages of *Time* or *Newsweek*, there was some hint of an experiment on the brink of being refined to the point where it could lead to a whole new way of life. What was it I'd read just the other day? I couldn't remember.

Methodically, I was about to consider the question of *why* anyone would want to control mass thinking, when somebody said: "I beg your pardon, sir, but would you mind answering a few questions? I'm with the Roper poll."

**I WAS GOING** to brush him off and get on with earning my pay when I saw who it was—Ed Rappoport, my old Air Force buddy. "Ed, you old son of a gun!" We banged each other on the back.

"Good to see you again, Smitty," he said when we'd hashed over the New Guinea campaign for a while. Needless to say, we'd zeroed in on a bar in the process. "Would you help me out on this quiz of mine? It'd help me meet my quota."

"Sure. What is it? The *Daily News* boycott?"

"No; that'd be too ephemeral for us. But it's amazing how everybody wants to talk about it. That and the bus pennies and the Supertang thing."

"What are they saying? You must be in one of the best spots in New York to get a peep into the mass mind."

"I'll say. Well, the general theme of it seems to be that we're getting back at them."

"Who's *them*?"

"Nobody in particular. Whoever happens to be trying to push us around, as they put it; making us do things we don't want to."

"This *us*, Ed. Do you feel that you're a part of it?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. It's nothing I'd thought out, mind you, but something got my dander up before I left the house this morning. I went through my various suits till I had eighteen pennies for the bus. I was kind of amazed at myself later and I resisted."

"Resisted? How do you mean?"

He laughed. "Well, I was standing at the bus stop. Three or four other peo-

ple were there waiting and every one of them had a handful of pennies, just like me. They were sort of grinning at each other, and at me. We'll-show-'em grins, like. Nobody's gonna shove me around. That kind of thing."

"I know. Getting some of their own back, as the British say."

"Exactly," Ed went on. "Resisting. Only I found myself resisting the resistance. I wondered how many hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions, here in this one geographical area, were acting in exactly the same way. It isn't normal, Smitty; it's highly unstatistical behavior. I know something about averages, from working in this opinion-sampling business, and people just don't act the way they've been acting for the last couple of days. And they never act unanimously—not unless they're being pushed."

"Hmm. You mean like in Hitler Germany or Soviet Russia. That any ninety-nine plus per cent *ja* or *da* election is a phony."

"That's what I mean. There's some outside force at work; there has to be."

"What makes you so sure?" I asked.

Because my resistance failed. I was resisting this influence—the one that at this particular moment was making people give the bus driver eighteen pennies. I wasn't going to be part of the mob. I was going to give the driver two dimes and get two cents change. I even had the two dimes in my hand."

"And then what?"

"As soon as I was in the bus, with the driver looking at me resignedly, I put the dimes back in my pocket and counted out eighteen pennies, one at a time, into the driver's hand."

WHILE I didn't believe Ed Rappoport had made any of it up, I was sure nobody could make me pay my fare with eighteen pennies if I wanted to hand over two dimes. "Try it," Ed had

said, and that's what I was about to do.

In addition to the fact that I was too much of an individualist to let myself conform to the mass norm, I had my loyalty to my bus company client to consider. I also had my surrender to the Supertang impulse to bolster me.

The bus pulled up to my corner. The first thing I noticed was the new sign next to the door: *Fare 18¢*. This insulting information was repeated on the fare box. As I went up the two steps the hand holding the dimes went involuntarily back into my pocket and came out with a fistful of change.

Raise the fare on me, would they? I'd show them. I deliberately counted out eighteen pennies, taking my time, then counted them out again into the driver's hand. He waited patiently, a half smile on his face, then dropped the coins into a nearly overflowing canvas sack next to his seat.

I sat down, my self-righteousness fading fast, and wondered what had got into me. Something or somebody, somewhere, had made me act directly contrary to my wishes. Not even a hypnotist could do that. This could be dangerous, if it was leading anywhere beyond annoyance to the bus company and possible bankruptcy of the *Daily News* and *Supertang*.

I was musing thus ominously when the bus pulled in at a corner behind an armored van of the United States Trucking Corporation. Two gray-uniformed UST men got out of the back of the van, loosened the flaps of their holsters and entered the bus.

"There'll be the usual delay," the driver announced to his passengers. "Smoke if you like." He lit up himself.

The uniformed men, straining, lifted the canvas sack full of pennies to the sidewalk where a third UST man waited next to a scale. With the fare boxes useless under the penny flood, there obviously had to be some other

method of accounting. I'd wondered what it would be. The UST men eased the sack onto the scale. One of them noted the weight on a form, signed it and handed it to the bus driver, together with a fresh sack.

I decided to get off. The bus driver called after me, "That wasn't no eighteen cents worth." I smiled mechanically at him and headed west toward Broadway.

Ed Rappoport had been right. The average man—that cussed, unpredictable fellow—had been acting with a highly untypical degree of conformity. He was having fun doing it, at the moment, but I had a hunch something coming up on the program would be less fun. And with this kind of control over him he'd have to do it. It might just happen to be something pretty unpleasant, like violent overthrow of the government.

But then I realized it wouldn't have to be violent. There'd be nobody to oppose the overthrow if everyone were of the same mind. All of a sudden, before you could say, or think, Jack Robinson, there'd be a dictator in the United States.

And there wouldn't be a whisper, not a thought, of opposition. *Love that man*, the telepathic control would transmit, and everyone would. And if there were another election the vote would be not ninety-nine but one hundred per cent yes.

Somebody was trying it out on a small scale first, I thought. Testing this thing that was big past belief. Seeing how far it would go.

Don't buy the *Daily News*.

Pay your bus fare in pennies.

Get double your money back from Supertang.

*Love that man.*

**WHAT MAN?** General Stacy Tranquen, by any chance? Suddenly I felt scared. This was no job for a lousy private investigator; this was a case for the FBI. But would the FBI

listen to a theory as wild as that, without a shred of proof?

Sure they would. They listened to anybody. They might even be working on it already, in their quiet, self-effacing, devastating way. I'd attended a few trials in Federal Court where FBI agents were government witnesses, and my professional envy of their efficiency was monumental.

The thought that the Federal boys might be on the job cheered me up so much that I considered resting my tired feet for an hour in a newsreel theater. I was at Broadway and 49th Street by then, in front of the Rivoli. The Trans-Lux was only a block south but I thought, what the hell? I'd rest a couple of hours in the Rivoli and work later into the evening. Mine was no nine-to-five job. That was one reason I was in it.

The Rivoli's picture was that big new one, "The Passionate Pride." I'd read the advance publicity. It starred Mallory Trayne, the great Broadway actor, in his first movie. Four years to produce. Five million dollars. As a result the nut was a big one, as they said in their trade, and the picture was being premiered at road show prices.

Oh-oh.

I took a look at the discreet little sign in the box office. \$2.75.

My gorge, generally fairly stable, was rising. Two seventy-five for a lousy movie! And in the afternoon, besides. Who did they think they were? And Mallory Trayne, that ham. Why, I wouldn't pay two seventy-five to see Gina Lollobrigida.

The cashier was looking at me without expression. I said to her through the little round hole in the glass: "I'm not buying a ticket. I'd just like to know how many suckers did."

She was grinning now. "If you bought, mister, you'd be number one."

Here it was again. That impossible hundred per cent boycott. My gorge subsiding to its accustomed place, I

headed downtown again, but not toward the Trans-Lux.

THE FBI agent I spoke to at 290 Broadway didn't laugh in my face. In fact, he was as grim-looking as any of these clean-cut, courteous, neatly-dressed young men ever allowed themselves to be—which wasn't very.

"We appreciate your bringing this matter to our attention, Mr. Smith." He'd examined my credentials and even the John Smith didn't get a smile out of him.

I told my story a second time with a stenographer taking it all down, waited while it was transcribed, and then signed it. I was politely rebuffed in my efforts to learn whether they planned to do anything, or were already doing something, or whether anybody else had come to them in alarm.

They took my home and office addresses and telephone numbers, made a note of my present and some of my past clients, and assured me they'd be delighted to receive any new information I might come upon, and politely showed me out.

Somebody started to tail me as I left the building. I was annoyed. Here I'd gone to the Federal boys of my own free will with a case I had every right to handle myself, especially since no laws had been broken, and they immediately slapped a shadow on me. Or instituted surveillance, as they would put it in their refined way. And a clumsy one, at that.

Then I realized this couldn't be the FBI; they weren't clumsy. Who was it?

I doubled back suddenly and caught him flat-footed. It was the thin old busybody with the sunken gray eyes who'd been on the bus with me the night people stopped buying the *Daily News*.

He gave me a big smile. "Hello, Mr. Smith."

For a moment I couldn't think of

his name. Then the image of a toy train flashed into my mind. "Lionel," I said. "Lionel Radin."

"You remember me. I'm flattered."

"What are you following me for? What do you want?"

"I told you it would all fit, if you recall. I think you've begun to see that it is fitting. Alarmingly so, or you wouldn't have gone to see the G-Men."

"What's it got to do with you?"

"You'd be interested to know, Mr. Smith. Indeed you would. You and your clients." He was still smiling.

HE SEEMED to know something about me. True, I'd given him my name, but telling somebody you were John Smith was as close as you get to giving no information at all. Why had he mentioned my clients? If he had anything to do with this wave of nonconformity that was sweeping New York—and I doubted that—why had he come to me? I certainly hadn't been able to stop it; I'd been swept up in it like everybody else.

But maybe he was just trying to cash in on the phenomenon. That's where my clients would come in; the word for what I was thinking was blackmail.

An interesting train of thought, Mr. Smith," he said. "But it's not blackmail."

The old man was reading my thoughts. I'd had that feeling the night on the bus, too, but I'd dismissed it. I gave him a hard look and his sunken eyes gave it right back to me. His mouth still smiled but his eyes didn't.

"We can't stand here in the middle of Broadway discussing it," he said. "You might offer to buy me a cup of coffee. It'd be a legitimate expense account item."

It was while we were sitting in the Chock Full o' Nuts on the corner of Worth street, having coffee and cream cheese on date-nut bread, that he told me he was an empathist.

"An empathist," I said. "Is that a fancy word for mind reader?"

"On the contrary. A so-called 'mind reader' absorbs the thoughts of others; an empathist projects thoughts or emotions into others' minds."

"You mean you're like a broadcasting station, and anybody who has a receiver can tune in on your thoughts?"

"Everybody is a receiver, at the moment. And they don't have to tune in; they receive willy-nilly, you might say."

I didn't want to believe a word of it. "Assuming that's so, you've been mighty busy these past few days."

"Yes, haven't I?" he said, pleased. "I've never had such success. I'd experimented for years without being able to influence more than one person at a time, and then only at close range. Now my suggestions go to thousands—hundreds of thousands—simultaneously. It's quite exciting."

"It must give you a tremendous sense of power," I said casually, watching him, "to be able to make people do what you want them to."

The old man frowned. "No," he said earnestly. "It's purely a scientific experiment. Not power. I don't want that—but that's the frightening thing. That's why I wanted to see you. My work has always been sociological. But now a political element is being injected. I don't like it at all."

"Injected? By whom?"

"I don't know; that's what scares me. I can't project back to the source. It reaches me but I can't reach it. Fortunately I've been able to resist it so far."

"What sort of thing have you been resisting?" Maybe I was being empathized again, but the old man's story was beginning to sound convincing. At least I was sure he believed what he was saying.

"Come up to my place tonight and watch television," he said with seeming irrelevance.

"Why should I?" Then I had a hunch. "Not the Spookie Masters Spectacular?"

Lionel Radin nodded. "Yes. One demonstration is worth any number of explanations."

**I FELT SORRY** for Spookie Masters, though I didn't know him personally. Masters had had an up-and-down career as a comic in night clubs and hotels.

I'd seen him once on the borscht circuit. It had been a Saturday night at Grossinger's, and the place was jammed. Spookie was the hardest working comedian I'd ever seen, and one of the funniest; but for some reason he'd never clicked in the really big time. I didn't know what it was—liquor, politics or just the breaks—but all his life he'd been trailing the star without catching it.

Spookie Masters was in his forties now. He'd always been fat; now he was going bald, and his feet seemed to be hurting him all the time. Somehow he'd been picked to m.c. Max Liebman's latest ninety-minute, girl-laden, talent-packed, color Spectacular on NBC. This had to be it for poor old Spookie. Either he made it tonight—with his audience of forty million, coast-to-coast and Canada—or he'd never make it.

I was pretty sure he wasn't going to make it—not with Lionel Radin, Empathist, about to use him for a demonstration.

Radin had a duplex in one of those narrow private houses that he had managed to hold out against the giant apartment buildings pre-empting almost every foot of Riverside Drive. He met me at the private elevator that came right into his study. Crackpot he might be, but he was no poor crackpot.

The Spectacular was to start at 9. I got there about quarter to. Radin showed me to an armchair next to an

end table on which were a seltzer bottle—I hadn't seen one since I was a kid—and an unopened bottle of Dewar's. There was also a fresh packet of oversized export-only Russian cigarettes.

Radin wore an elegant smoking jacket, what the French call *le smoking*, over a dinner jacket, which I would have called a tuxedo in less impressive surroundings. He didn't smoke or drink, apparently; on the table next to his chair was a little tin of Jamaica ginger.

I was taking in all this, and more, with what I imagined to be one of my unobtrusive once-overs when he said, "Oh, I came by it all quite honestly, you may be sure." He was reading my mind again. I felt an unprofessional flush on my face. "That's all right," he said. "Have a whiskey. Or if you prefer brandy—?"

"Scotch is fine," I said and busied myself getting it open. "I have an idea what you plan to do," I told him as I poured myself a good-sized starter and squirted in a trace of soda, "and I wish you wouldn't. I hate to see it happen to poor old Spookie."

HE LEANED forward, interested, nibbling on a piece of ginger. "Just what do you imagine will happen?"

I took a sip of my drink. "Somewhere in the middle of the first commercial," I guessed, "you're going to empathize everybody watching into thinking this is a lousy show and they'll all switch over to CBS. It's a dirty trick, Mr Radin."

"You're clairvoyant, Mr. Smith," he said with a chuckle. "That's exactly what will happen, at least I hope it will. You must remember I've never tried empathy on a nationwide scale before. Then, too, the conditions have to be right."

"What conditions?"

"Well, it has to be a lousy show, as you phrased it so colorfully. At least

enough people have to think so to give me a locus to focus on empathically."

I think that's what he said. "Maybe it won't work," I said.

"It's a possibility, of course. But if it does, imagine the consternation at NBC when they get the ratings from Nielsen and Trendex and find that not a solitary set has been tuned to the last hour of Spookie Masters. That the rating isn't 59 or even 18.3, but zero. Radio City will be a shambles."

He tittered, that's the only word for it. Still tittering, he went over to the 24-inch TV and turned it on. It was a color set, I saw.

Channel 4 came in. *Poor Max Liebman*, I thought. *Poor Spookie Masters*. *Poor General Sarnoff*.

The opening commercial was brief. Spookie came on. He was sweating already, I noticed. He went into one of his monologues.

I recognized it as the one about the critical woman in the butcher shop. She was disparaging the chicken the butcher had offered. As Spookie told it, she smelled it under one wing, smelled it under the other, turned it upside down and smelled between its legs, then told the butcher: "This chicken stinks!" The butcher shrugged. "Madam," he said, "could you pass such a test?"

I howled at that one, as I always did, but old Lionel Radin was sitting there stony-faced.

"Give the guy a break," I said. "Don't—"

"Quiet!" Radin said. "It's beginning."

"What's beginning?"

But he shushed me into silence. I poured myself a quiet drink and watched him watching Spookie. Only now he didn't seem to be looking quite that far. His eyes were out of focus. He was sweating.

"Mr. Radin!" I said sharply, but he didn't seem to hear.

Spookie Masters, who had been going through some crazy kind of sight

gag with his necktie and the sleeve of his coat, abruptly dropped the act and became utterly straight-faced.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "there's a time for buffoonery and a time to be serious. This is a time to be serious." (*Shade of Eddie Cantor, I thought.*) "I hope you will indulge me if I talk to you for just a moment about something vital to us all. We all know of the campaign of slander and innuendo that has been directed against that great American, General Stacy Tranquen, now that he has retired with valor from the battles and become chairman of America Plus..."

*Oh, no, I thought. Not coast-to-coast.* Was this what had kept Spookie Masters from making it? Was he so stupid that he'd let his politics ruin his act? So he was an apologist for that would-be blackshirt, Stacy Tranquen. All right; it takes all kinds. But not on a show. Funny, though, he hadn't done it at Grossinger's...

**T**HEN I looked back at Lionel Radin. He still had that non-focused stare. He was empathizing like mad—not at me, but at Spookie. This must be the frightening thing he had mentioned to me in the Chock Full O' Nuts, the political element he said was being injected. The thing he had been able to resist—up to now.

"Radin!" I said. He was oblivious to me.

I grabbed the seltzer bottle and squirted him full in the face. The soda poured down his chin and unstarched his shirt front. I squirted the whole bottle at him.

It was enough. He gasped and reached for a handkerchief. I looked back at Spookie, in the TV. He seemed to be coming out of a trance. He had that where-was-I look. He tried to retrieve it. "Madam," he said, off the pace and fumbling, "could *you* pass such a test?"

"Radin!" I said. "Come out of it, do something. Save Spookie!"

I didn't know how he could, or if he could, but he was the only one who could possibly do anything.

"What?" Radin said vaguely. "Who?" But in a tick he was back with me. He threw down his soggy handkerchief and concentrated on Spookie's electronic image.

The studio audience roared with laughter. Spookie, reassured, picked up the pace. The orchestra backed him up. He flipped out his necktie and caressed it with his coat sleeve. He went into a crazy dance and the audience roared again. "When I was a boy in Rivington Street," Spookie sang. He had them back in the palm of his hand.

Lionel Radin got up with some effort and clicked off the television set. "They nearly had me," he said. "I want to thank you, Mr. Smith, you and the seltzer bottle."

"It was the seltzer," I said. "I don't think Canada Dry would have done it."

Then the FBI was with us. There must have been ten or a dozen of them, smooth-faced, well-tailored, efficient young men, pouring out of the private elevator.

**I** READ LATER that Spookie Masters had been a smash. Not only Nielsen and Trendex and American Research and Pulse and Videodex agreed, but so did *Variety* and Jack Gould in the *Times* and John Crosby in the *Herald Trib.* Spookie's lapse into electioneering for America Plus seemed to have gone unnoticed, a phenomenon I attributed to my seltzer bottle and Lionel Radin's quick empathy job.

What the FBI boys offered in explanation was the item I had never digested from the accounts in *Time* and *Newsweek*, about the comet. Not the comet so much as the comet's tail.

The special agents smoothly quoted pronouncements of the National Science Foundation about the intensification of senscience the aura of the tail



provoked. They knew how long the Earth had been in the aura (since Tuesday, it was) and what effect this had on men of science like Duke's Professor Rhine, my Lionel Radin, and General Stacy Tranquen's Doctor X.

They took Mr. Radin down to Foley Square for questioning, and I went along to sort of run interference. I must have run well, because questioning was all they did—whereas another batch of agents brought in Dr. X and arraigned him on charges of sedition and a few other things, some of them pertaining to the Federal Communications Act.

They even told me who Dr. X was. The name didn't mean anything to me, but his connection did, he'd been one of the brains at one of the big electric corporations before senility and hero-worship set in and America Plus snapped him up.

I asked the Federal boys what they were doing about Tranquen himself but it seemed he couldn't be touched; he'd been too careful—so far. Nevertheless, I got the impression that the dossiers were piling up and that the surveillance was intense.

I TOOK Lionel Radin home in a cab on my ebbing expense account and he sorted out a few loose ends for me.

He said a bit smugly that Dr. X's was a limited kind of empathy—that it had to be souped up through Radin's to be effective.

Nevertheless, I opined, proud of my seltzer squirting, it had been a narrow squeak. America Plus almost had us all under its heel.

"Not so narrow," Radin said. "Their try with Spookie Masters was only a dry run; besides, time was running out on them."

"You mean the G-Men were all set to swoop."

"No," he smiled. "Even if they hadn't swooped there'd have been no danger. You see—" he looked at his watch "—the Earth passed out of the comet's tail half an hour ago. I'm afraid my influence is at an end."

"You can't empathize any more?"

"Only on the limited scale I practiced before the special conditions prevailed. They were quite special, you must realize..." He went on to say something about the cosmicized tail of the comet having energized the electrical quotient of the atmosphere and the brain cells and the coincident increase in solar activity. He even gave me the bit about the locus focus again.

I panted along behind his explanation for a while, steadily losing ground. "Skip it, Mr. Radin," I said at last. "I'll read about it in next week's *Time*. That's as deep as I can go without getting the bends."

I dropped him off at his door and took the cab home. *Bye-bye expense account*, I thought. When I write up my reports tomorrow I'll be clientless again.

I wasn't entirely convinced that the case was finished, though, until I stopped at my corner newsstand. Andy looked at me quizzically.

"*Daily News?*" I said doubtfully.

Andy thrust it at me. "Why not?"



Another Fine Story by RICHARD WILSON

### *The In-Betweens*

*is featured in Issue Number 32 of*

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## Many Mansions



THERE ARE innumerable ways of categorizing fiction, and any one of them can be right, depending upon what aspects of fiction you want to think about, and what points you want to make. Since we're interested in science fiction, the question of "reputation" takes on a bit of importance to those of us whose regard is more than casual. Thus, Damon Knight's division of fiction into the "reputable" and the "disreputable", for the purposes of his introductory chapter of *"In Search of Wonder"*, has quite a good deal of bearing upon our interests.

In this discussion, "reputable" refers to kinds of fiction which have a good reputation with critics and librarians, teachers, etc., and not with the merit of any particular novel or story in the category. Various novels by Theodore Dreiser, for example, are considered of the "reputable" type, but they aren't regarded as very good examples. On the other hand, while individual members of the strangely amorphous (yet formidable) court which passes judgment may have a sneaking admiration for Sherlock Holmes, that sort of fiction really isn't "reputable", you know.

What's the touchstone for "reputable" fiction then? Well, says Knight, it *"tries to deal honestly*

*with the tragic and poetic theme of love-and-death."* \*Where does "disreputable" fiction fail? Such fiction, Knight explains, reduces "love and death to perfunctory gestures, formalized almost like ideographs. (The villain falls over a cliff; the heroine falls into the hero's arms; neither event takes more than a paragraph.)"

The key word, I think is "honestly." In the "reputable" novel love isn't just a device to keep a story going, nor is death a handy way of solving someone's problems and tying everything up neatly before the final fadeout.

James Gunn dissents: *"Love-and-death can be the theme of science fiction, but it doesn't have to be. A perfectly honest, perfectly sound, perfectly good science fiction novel can be written without ever approaching the theme... Love-and death can be a proper theme in science fiction only when it is the sociological problem as well..."*\*\*

It seems to me that Mr. Gunn has missed the point. While Knight did not explicitly say so, (and I do not pretend to be able to read his mind),

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\* *"In Search Of Wonder"*, by Damon Knight, pp 3.

\*\* *Inside*, March 1957, pp 26 ff

the internal evidence of his writings show that he was not saying that love-and-death is set out baldly as the theme of all reputable fiction. The key word, I repeat, is "*honestly*"... and surely Knight makes it clear in the over-all tenor of his criticisms that he is aware that there are many kinds of love, and many kinds of death.

FOR ALL fiction deals with love and death, in one way or another. "Love" doesn't mean "romance" exclusively, or intimate relations between the sexes. There is love of oneself (pride); love of reputation (envy); love of feeling that one is right—or righteous (anger); love of wealth and possessions (covetousness); love of food and drink (gluttony); love of erotic pleasure, for its own sake, (lust); love of ease (sloth); etc. And they all take innumerable guises and disguises, so that the victims of such varieties of love may be quite unaware of them.

The seven elements specified in parenthesis above have been labelled the "Seven Deadly Sins" by Christendom for the very good reason that each, perservered in, results in a kind of death. The excessively proud person, for example, is not only difficult to get along with, but is crippled and blinded by his obsession; the person who is eaten by envy cannot enjoy what he has; the person who is constantly in a state of indignation over the failings of others and the world is consuming himself alive; the love of that which belongs to others brings misery to all involved; he who "lives to eat and drink" has settled for a lower order of existence than we would call "human"; lust makes the newspapers go around, and laziness isn't recommended in any culture I've ever heard of.

One thinks of these things, perhaps, as just religious matters and it is true that nearly every religion known has found them important for consideration. Many of the great Greek dramas deal with Pride (hubris), and the retribution that follows for whoever exalts himself overmuch. But the im-

portant thing is not so much that any religion warns against such kinds of love as lead to inner death and stagnation (however much longer a man may continue to respire and ingest, etc.), but that these and their opposite "virtues" form the basic elements of human relationships.

Reputable fiction deals honestly with human relationships, whatever the background of the story, whatever the technology of the background.

At this point you might ask, "Well, doesn't so-called 'disreputable' fiction deal with them, too? Isn't the villain's ambition, anger, pride, lust, covetousness, etc., the core of his motivation? Isn't his death—by falling off a cliff, or whatever—the outcome of his sins and crimes? Doesn't such fiction try to show that "crime doesn't pay?"

In a sense, yes, of course. But such types of treatment are primitive and are on the level of the old morality plays, narratives whose sole purpose was to deliver a simple sermon. For earlier times, before there was much background of data on human behaviour and motivations, or for the illiterate and untaught, this was a high form of art. It isn't good enough for us, as fiction. Dealing honestly with a subject means going as deeply into it as possible within the limitations of one's knowledge, and the necessary restrictions of the medium. And it is just such honest treatment which most science fiction evades, being content with technological exploration and plot devices. Of course, there can be and have been interesting and exciting and enjoyable stories (and by no means only in science fiction) wherein the authors did not attempt to deal with love and death honestly. But when such stories are weighed in the balance, they're all found wanting; they not only say nothing, but imply that there is nothing to be said. That is one reason why "outdated" science fiction (and other popular fiction to a large extent) seems so stale. All the interest and excitement depended upon devices—plot devices, backgrounds, inventions,

catastrophes, etc. But once the glitter is off, there's nothing left.

ON THE OTHER hand, a novel like "*Anna Karenina*"—based on one of the oldest plots in the world, the "eternal triangle"—is "dated" only in that it takes place in a past century, and the styles and furniture, etc., belong to that period. The story itself isn't outdated and isn't likely to be for many decades to come—perhaps centuries. Not so long as there are men who find themselves in a situation analagous to Vronsky's or Karenin's, or women who are in a situation like Anna's.

What dissenters overlook, partly, is that love and death, as the theme, is often disguised—in fact, dealing honestly with it requires going into by-ways which in themselves disguise it. For example, Theodore Sturgeon's comment on the fact that the fellow in love with old shoes *loves* loving old shoes.

There are special elements in science fiction; there are also special elements in sea stories, in war stories, in detective-mystery stories, and so on. Of course we want the special elements! If your bent was to sea stories, you wouldn't be happy picking up a magazine which claimed to cater to your special interest when you found that most of the stories were (a) not about the sea (b) by authors who

couldn't tell salt water from fresh (c) by authors who didn't know and obviously didn't care about the differences between one type of ship and another (d) set at sea, but by changing a few words could just as easily happened in a hotel. No, it's the special elements that make us read science fiction when we do, instead of some other kind of fiction that may be handy at the time—and we've been outraged by attempts to make science fiction popular by throwing out the special elements. That's as if, in the current issue of "*Sea Sagas*" all the stories took place when the protagonists were on shore leave, and the heroes wanted to be advertising executives, anyway.

Specialties and special elements come and go. The special elements may give us that elusive sense of wonder; they may lead us to look up something in science; they may lead to writing careers, to friendships based upon the common interest—but without honest exploration of love and death (in one or another of the many mansions of the theme) science fiction will remain without weight in the larger field of literature. It will be nothing more than what it has been, for the most part, up to now: at the very best, momentarily amusing *tours de force*—and seldom as much as that. RAWL



It didn't start with a blonde and a scream in the night. That came later!

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The three-headed man was battling himself.



# EN ROUTE TO EARTH

by Calvin M. Knox

(author of "Sunrise On Mercury")

Being nursemaid to various and sundry kinds of aliens can be somewhat taxing on a girl . . .

**B**EFORE the flight, the Chief stewardess stopped off in the women's lounge to have a few words with Milissa, who was making her first extrasolar hop as stewardess of the warliner *King Magnus*.

Milissa was in uniform when the Chief Stewardess appeared; the low-cut clinging plastic trimmed her figure nicely, and, gazing in the mirror, she studied her clear blue skin for blemishes. There were none.

"All set?" the Chief Stewardess asked.

Milissa nodded, a little too eagerly. "Ready, I guess. Blastoff time's in half an hour, isn't it?"

"Yes. Not nervous, are you?"

"Nervous? Who, me?" Somewhat anxiously she added, "Have you seen the passenger list?"

"Yes."

"How's the breakdown. Are there—many strange aliens?" Milissa said. "I mean—"

"A few," the Chief Stewardess said cheerfully. "You'd better report to the ship now, dear."

The *King Magnus* was standing on its tail, glimmering proudly in the hot Vegan sun, as Milissa appeared on the arching approach-ramp. Two blue-skinned Vegan spacemen lounged against the wall of the Administration Center, chatting with a pilot from Earth; all three whistled as she went

by. Milissa ignored them, and proceeded to the ship.

She took the lift-plate up to the nose hatch of the ship, smiled politely at the jetman who waited at the entrance, and went in. "I'm the new stewardess."

"Captain Brilon's waiting for you in the fore cabin," the jetman said.

Milissa checked in as per instructions, adjusted her cap at just the proper angle (with Captain Brilon's too-eager assistance) and picked up the passenger list.

"Blastoff in twelve minutes," the Captain announced. "You stay here until we're in warp-drive. Then you'll have to keep the passengers happy from there to Earth."

"I'll try, Captain." She smiled, hoping her tenseness didn't show. After a year of strictly local hops, this was her first subspace voyage.

She studied the passenger list. As she had feared, there were creatures of all sorts aboard. Vega served as a funnel for travellers from all over the galaxy who were heading to Earth.

**S**HE LOOKED down the list.

*Grigori—Jamès, Josef, Mike. Returning to Earth after extended stay on Alpheraz IV. Seats 21-22.*

Brothers vacationing together, she thought. How nice. But three of them in two seats? Peculiar!

*Xfooz, Nartoosh. Home world, Sirius VII. First visit to Earth. Seat 23.*

*Dellamon, Thogral. Home world, Procyon V. Business trip to Earth. Seat 25.*

And on down the list. At the bottom, the Chief Stewardess had pencilled a little note:

*Be courteous, cheerful, and polite. Don't let the aliens frighten you—and above all, don't look at them as if they're worms or toads, even if some of them are worms or toads. Worms or not, they're still customers.*

*Watch out for any Terrans aboard. They don't have any color-prejudices*

*against pretty Vegans with blue skin. Relax and have a good time. The return trip ought to be a snap.*

*I hope so,* Milissa thought fervently. She took a seat in the corner of the cabin and started counting seconds till blastoff.

The stasis-generators lifted the *King Magnus* off Vega II as lightly as a feather blown by the wind, and Captain Brilon indicated that Milissa should introduce herself to the passengers.

"Right." She stepped through the bulkhead doors that led to the passenger section, paused a moment to readjust her cap and tug at her uniform, and pushed open the iris-ing sphincter that segregated crew from passengers.

The passenger-hold stretched out for perhaps a hundred feet before her. It was lined with huge view-windows on both sides, and the passengers—fifty of them, according to the list—turned as one to look at her when she entered.

She suppressed a little gasp. All shapes, all forms—and what was *that* halfway down the row...?

"Hello," she said, forcing it to come out cheery and bright. "My name is Milissa Kleirn, and I'll be your stewardess for this trip. This is the *King Magnus*, fourth ship of the Vegan Line. We'll be making the trip from Vega II to Sol III in three days, seven hours, and some minutes, under the command of Captain Alib Brilon. The drive-generators have already hurled us from the surface of Vega; we've entered warp, and are well on our way to Earth. I'll be on hand to answer any of your questions—except the very technical ones; you'll have to refer those through me to the Captain. And if you want magazines, or anything else, press the button at the side of your seat. Thank you very much."

*There,* she thought. *That wasn't so bad.*

And then the indicator-panel started to flash. She picked a button out at random, pressed it. A voice said, "This is Mike Grigori, Seat 22. How about coming down here to talk to me a minute?"

**SHE DEBATED.** The Chief Stewardess had warned her about ram-bunctious Earthmen—but yet, this was her first request as stewardess, and besides there was something agreeably pleasant about Mike Grigori's voice. She started down the aisle and reached Seat 22, still smiling.

Mike Grigori sat with his two brothers. As she approached, he extended an arm and beckoned to her wolfishly with a crooked forefinger. He winked.

"You're Mr. Grigori?"

"I'm Mike. Like you to meet my brothers, James and Josef. Fellows, this is Miss Kleirn. The Stewardess."

"How do you do," Milissa said. The smile started to fade; with an effort, she restored it.

There was a certain family resemblance about the Grigori brothers. And she saw now why they only needed two seats. They had only one body between them.

"This is Jim, over here," Mike was saying, indicating the head at farthest left. "He's something of a scholar, aren't you, Jim?"

The head named Jim turned gravely to examine Milissa, doing so with the aid of a magnifying glass it held to its eye monocle-wise. Jim affected an uptilted mustache; Mike, looking much younger and more ebullient, was cleanshaven; he wore his hair close-cropped.

"And this is Josef," Mike said, nodding toward the center head. "Make sure you spell that J-O-S-E-F, like so. He's very fussy about that. Used to be plain Joe, but now nothing's fancy enough for him."

Josef was an aristocratic-looking type; his hair was slicked back flat

and his nose inclined slightly upward. He maintained a fixed pose, staring forward as if in intent meditation, and confined his greetings to a muttered *Hmph*.

"He's the intellectual sort," Mike confided. "Keeps us up half the night when he wants to read. But we manage. We have to put up with him because he's got the central nervous system, and half the arms."

Milissa noticed that the brothers had four arms—one at each shoulder, presumably for the use of Mike and Jim, and two more below them, whose scornful foldedness indicated they were controlled entirely by the haughty Josef.

"You're—from Earth?" Milissa asked, a little stunned.

"Mutants," said Jim.

"Genetic manipulation," explained Mike.

"Abnormalities. Excrescences on my shoulders," muttered Josef.

"He thinks he got here first," Mike said. "That Jim and I were tacked on top *his* body later."

It looked about to degenerate into a family feud; Milissa wondered what a fight among the brothers would look like. But one of her duties was to keep peace in the passenger lounge. "Is there anything specific you'd like to ask me, Mr. Grigori?" she asked Mike. "If not, I'm afraid the other passengers..."

"Specific? Sure. I'd like to make a date with you when we hit Earth. Never dated a Vegan girl—but that blue skin is really lovely."

"Vetoed," Josef said without turning his head.

Mike whirled. "*Vetoed!* Now, look here, brother...you don't have absolute and final say on every..."

"The girl will only refuse," Josef said. "Don't waste our time on dalliance. I'm trying to think, and your chatter disturbs me."

Again tension grew. Quickly Milissa



said, "Your brother's right, Mr. Grigori. Vegan Lines personnel are not allowed to date passengers. It's an absolute rule."

Dismay registered on two of the three heads; Josef merely looked more smug. Another crisis seemed brewing among the mutant brothers when suddenly a creature several seats behind them tossed a magazine it had been reading into the aisle with a great outcry of rage.

"Excuse me," Milissa said. "I'll have to see what's upsetting him."

GRATEFUL for the interruption, she moved up the aisle. The alien who had thrown the magazine was a small, pinkish being, whose eyes, dangling on six-inch eyestalks, now quivered in what she supposed was rage.

Milissa stooped, one hand keeping her neckline from dipping (there was no telling *what* sexual habits these aliens had) and picked up the magazine. *Science Fiction Stories*,\* she saw, and there was a painting of an alien much like the one before her printed on the glossy cover.

"I think you dropped this, Mr... Mr..."

"Dellamon," the alien replied, in a cold, testy, snappish voice. "Thogral Dellamon, of Procyon V. And I *didn't* drop the magazine. I threw it down violently, as you very well saw."

She smiled apologetically. "Of course, Mr. Dellamon. Did you see something you disagreed with in the magazine?" It was a Terran offering, she saw.

"Disagreed with? I saw something that was a positive *insult*!" He snatched the magazine from her, rifled through it, found a page and handed it back.

The book was open to Page 113. The title of the story was "Slaves Of The Pink Beings," bylined J. Eckman Forester. She skimmed the first few lines; it was typical—full of monsters

and bloodshed, and just as dull as every other science fiction story she had tried to read.

"I hope I won't make you angry when I say I don't see anything worth getting angry over in this, Mr. Dellamon."

"That story," he said, "tells of the conquests and sadistic pleasures of a race of evil pink beings—and of their destruction by *Earthmen*. Look at that cover painting! It's an exact image of—well, you see? This is vicious propaganda aimed at my people! And none of it's true! None!"

The cover picture indeed bore a resemblance to the indignant little alien. But the date under the heading caught Milissa's eye. *June 2114*. Three hundred years old. "Where did you get this magazine?" she asked.

"Bought it. Wanted to read an Earth magazine, as long as I had to go there, so I had a man on my planet get one for me."

"Oh. That explains it, then. Look at the date, Mr. Dellamon! That story's a complete fantasy! It was written more than a hundred years before Earth and Procyon came into contact!"

"But...fantasy...I don't understand..."

THE SPUTTERING little alien seemed about to become apoplectic. Milissa wished prodigiously that she had never transferred out of local service. These aliens could be so *touchy*, at times!

"Excuse me, please," said a furry, purple creature seated across the aisle. "That magazine you have there—mind if I look at it?"

"Here," the angry alien said. He tossed it over. The purple being examined it, smiled delightedly, said, "Why, it's an issue I need! Will you take five hundred credits for it?"

"Five hundred..." The eyestalks

stopped quivering, and drooped in an expression of probable delight. "Make it five-fifty and the book is yours!" \*

Crisis after crisis after crisis, Milissa thought gloomily. They were two days out from Vega, with better than a day yet to go before Earth hove into sight. And if the voyage lasted much longer, she'd go out of her mind.

The three Grigori brothers had finally erupted into violence late the first day; they sprang from their seat and went rolling up the aisle, cursing fluently at each other in a dozen languages. Josef had the upper hand for a while, rearing back and pounding his brothers' heads together, but he was outnumbered, and was in dire straits, by the time Milissa found two crewmen to put a stop to the brawl.

Then there was the worm-like being from Albireo III who suddenly discovered she was going to sporulate, and did—casting a swarm of her encapsulated progeny all over the lounge. She was very apologetic, and assisted Milissa in finding the spores, but it made a tedious, irritating mess.

The Grekla brothers from Deneb Kaitos I caused the next crisis. Greklans, Milissa discovered, had most peculiar sexual arrangements: they spent most of their existence as neuters, but at regular periods—about a decade

apart—suddenly developed sex, at which time the procedure was to mate, and fast. One of the brothers abruptly became a male, the other female, to their great surprise, consternation, and delight. The squeals of a puritanical being from Fomalhaut V attracted Milissa's attention; she managed to hustle the Greklans off to a washroom just in time. They returned, an hour later, to announce they had reverted to neuter status, and would name their offspring Milissa, but that scarcely helped her nerves.

*Never again,* Milissa told herself, surveying the array of life-forms in the lounge. *Back to local service for me. As soon as the return trip is over...*

Eleven hours to Earth. She hoped she could stay sane that long.

FROZEN asparagus turned up on the menu the final night. It was a grave tactical mistake; three vegetable-creatures of Mirach IX accused the Vegan Lines of fomenting cannibalism, and stalked out of the dining room. Milissa followed them and found them seriously ill of nausea and threatening to sue. She hadn't noticed until then how very much like asparagus-stalks the Mirachians looked; nor had anyone in the galley, apparently.

A family of reptiloids from Algenib became embroiled with a lizard-like inhabitant of Altair II; it took what was left of Milissa's tattered diplomacy to separate the squabblers and persuade them all to retake their seats.

She counted hours. She counted minutes. And, finally, she counted seconds.

"Earth ahead!" came the announcement from control cabin.

She went before the passengers to make the traditional final speech. Calmly, almost numbly, she thanked them for their cooperation, hoped they had enjoyed the flight, wished them the best of everything on Earth.

Mike-Jim-Josef Grigori paused to say goodbye on their way out. They

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\* Faithful readers of *Science Fiction Stories*, we trust, will be as relieved as your editor was to discover that the magazine referred to here was a pirate venture, eventually quashed. Since most copies were seized and destroyed, collectors were ready to pay fabulous prices for them, so even at five hundred and fifty credits, the furry creature got himself an unheard of bargain. Unfortunately, the pseudo-*Science Fiction Stories* had considerable circulation in the out-worlds before its just demise, and it is obviously the only (alleged) science fiction magazine that Milissa had ever read. RAWL

looked slightly bruised and battered. For the seventh time, Milissa explained to Mike how regulations prohibited her from dating, and finally they said goodbye. They walked down the ramp snarling and cursing at each other.

She watched them all go—the Greklans, the angry little man from Procyon, the asparagus-like Mirachians. She felt a perverse fondness for them all.

"That's the last," she said, turning to Captain Brilon. "And thank goodness."

"Tired, huh?"

"All you had to do was watch instruments," she said. "I was playing nursemaid to upteen different life-forms. But the return trip will be a rest. Just Earthmen and Vegans, I hope. No strange non-humanoid forms. I can't wait!"

**S**HE RETURNED to the ship after the brief leave allotted her, and found herself almost cheerful at the prospect of the return trip. The passengers filed aboard—pleasant, normal Vegans and Earthmen, who whistled at her predictably but who showed no

strange and unforeseeable mating habits or other manifestations.

It was going to be a quiet trip, she told herself. A snap.

But then three dark, furry shapes entered the lounge and huddled self-consciously in the back. Milissa bit her lip and glanced down at the passenger-list.

*Three spider-men from Arcturus VII. These creatures do not have names. They are extremely sensitive and will require close personal attention.*

Milissa shuddered; even without a mirror handy, she knew her face was paling to a weak ultramarine. She could get used to Greklans and sporulating worms from Albireo, she thought. She could calm petulant Procyonites and fend off wolvisish three-headed Earthmen. But there was nothing in her contract about travellers from Arcturus.

She stared at the hairy, eight-legged creatures; twenty-four arachnid eyes glinted beadily back at her.

It was asking too much. No woman should be expected to take solicitous care of *spiders*.

Sighing, she realized it was going to be long, long voyage home.

Dames be dammed! Multiple murder made this a case of

## PRETTY GAL, PRETTY GUN

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# Consolation Prize

**Novelet by D. A. JOURDAN**

(author of "Children of Fortune")



(illustration by E.M.S.H.)

Society gave him his choice: he could have long life and panodyne, the happy-pills, but not creative work, or necessarily the woman he wanted; or, he could do the kind of work he wanted to do, and have the woman of his choice—but only live as long as men had in the day before extended mortality was perfected. Either—but not both; and Dana wanted both . . .



# CONSOLATION PRIZE



by D. A. Jourdan

**W**AITING for her by their own evergreen in the park, Dana savored the satisfaction of knowing that he could be as sure of Zona's love as he was of her beauty. Two months of possessing such a gift had not dulled its wonder, and he knew that the next two hundred years wouldn't.

Dana frowned and paused in his pacing along the path. The way he was going, he wouldn't live to be two hundred—not even in the statically secure world of 2137. Not even though he was Class II, and therefore entitled to such longevity. He gnawed his lower lip, for the fault was no one's but his own.

Out of the gloom, Zona's slender figure appeared suddenly down the path and he gladly put the unwelcome self-accusation from his mind and hurried to her. He embraced her and knew the pleasure-pain of being as close as it was possible to be to another living creature—and knowing it was not close enough.

He murmured in her ear, "All day, not touching you—not even looking at you for fear my eyes will give me away—" He shook his head so that her soft, heavy hair stroked his cheek. "It's a test in discipline that gets harder each day..."

"Fail your test and you fail me." Zona's laugh lacked a convincing gaiety. "Anyhow, it allows you to give yourself more completely to your work". She was trying to sound teasing, but he suspected it was an effort. "When we first met, you were afraid to love me—afraid it would steal you from your precious work. Have you forgotten?"

Dana touched her silken hair, wished the twilight didn't hide its brightness. "I was a fool..."

He loved most her calm, but when

Zona spoke again her voice was troubled. "Remember your promise, Dana. Keep our secret."

He thought he knew why she was reluctant for them to bring their love out into the open. He had seen the way Arven looked at her sometimes. But nothing was as urgent, as imperious, as his need for her. "How much longer? You're going to marry me—"

"Give me time, Dana. You know I love you—"

"Don't make it too long, Zona. There's a special reason I need you; there's something even you don't know about me." She laughed at him, tenderly. He went on doggedly, "Listen. I've always hated the stupid, bovine faces of heavy users. Then, too, I wanted to give myself completely to my work. I guess only something like that could bring a man to do such a crazy thing. But I'm off panodyne—been off it for years. That's why I need you so terribly. Until I can get accustomed again..."

"Off panodyne!" Her voice was both shocked and amused. "How could you do such a thing?"

He suspected mockery, but he answered her seriously. "I weaned myself. You know the saying; as oil slows destruction of machinery's moving parts, so panodyne soothes man from life's despairs. I wanted to see if my work would improve, were I as naked to life's stresses as a Class I."

"You disobey Management's rule that all Class II's must take at least minimum dosage of panodyne; you voluntarily accept a lesser life expectancy—and now you change your mind." She took his arm and steered him to a nearby bench. "Now you want to go back on it. Why?"

He wanted to shake her, hard enough to toss her long hair. He couldn't see her grey eyes in the darkness, but he

more than suspected that they held the dancing flecks of obsidian that appeared only when she was teasing. "You know only panodyne confers longevity; only panodyne protects us from the stress of living."

"Panodyne and Zona," she corrected him, teasingly. "So that's why you want me—to soothe and comfort you."

**H**E WOULDN'T be cajoled into playfulness. "At first I was even rash enough to think of persuading you off it," he said earnestly. "I wanted nothing between us, not even the most benign of drugs. And then I came to realize that the most wonderful thing about you was your peace and serenity. The gentleness of you." He stopped. "You must have heard from people at work what a short fuse I used to have. A couple of times, different bosses were on the verge of ordering me on compulsory increased dosage..."

Zona said mirthfully, "And all the time you weren't even taking your compulsory minimum—"

Dana fumbled for her hand in the dark. "But after you came to work for Arven—I was different. Better." He kissed her absently. "Your calm permeated me like—"

"Like linament permeates aching muscles?"

He couldn't help laughing with her. "Exactly."

She stood up, faced him, her two hands warm and soft on his face. "I've news for you, Dana."

He strained unsuccessfully to see her face.

"Whatever calm I have—my personality doesn't come out of a panodyne pellet. I haven't taken any to speak of since I met you..."

"But you must!" Alarm turned to anger. "It's dangerous not to."

"Look at me," she said nonchalantly, her arms akimbo. "Do I look sick? Nervous? Anyway, I didn't go off the stuff deliberately, like you. I just—" She hesitated, tried to understand.

"After I met you I sort of forgot to take it. More and more often—I'd just forget, that's all. Once I'd got out of the habit—" she brushed her hands together like a child cleansing them of dirt. "It wasn't important any more..."

He digested that. Finally he spoke, earnestly. "I didn't care before—all I wanted was to work well. It didn't matter what it cost me. But now I've got you I want every minute of longevity I can get; and only panodyne can give that to me."

"And what about the stupid faces, the dull minds of heavy users? Do you want maximum longevity that much?"

Dana sounded as torn as he felt. "I hate that. But I love you. And now I've got you, I want to live. As long as I can..."

Zona took a long breath. "What about your work?" She tried to remember his exact words. "What about being able to respond to life's stresses?"

Dana didn't bother to hide his bitterness. "It doesn't matter. You know the terrific game I developed. Arven won't so much as look at it. He's angry because his last four entries in the Competition weren't even cited." He shrugged. "What's the use of creating games that no one plays..."

Zona reminded him, "Only Class I's are supposed to create."

"Well I'm one of Arven's chief assistants! Who's to know the line between assisting and creating! And who gives a damn who gets the credit—just so the game is played!"

She pretended to back away in fear at his violence.

Dana didn't want to think about it any more. He said insistently, "How much longer are you going to make me wait to marry you? Why do we have to keep it a secret?"

**Z**ONA TOOK his arm and started walking toward the edge of the park and their dinner. "Did you really

play in a public Deathball game? Office gossips says that's how you came to be assistant to Arven. But if you did play and survive—why wouldn't any man accept promotion to Class I?"

"Who wants to be Class I?" Dana demanded. She simply didn't seem to understand at all. "Sure, I could have had Class I—and paid for it. No more panodyne."

"But you're off it, anyway," she pointed out. "You might as well have the privileges since you're taking the risk."

Dana stopped walking, struggled to control his exasperation. It was a fair question, really. "I didn't accept Class I status," he said in a strange, flat voice, "because I was afraid. Because you can only change your status once. When you cross the class line in either direction—you stay. You can't go back..."

After a long silence, he repeated it again. "I'm afraid. As much as I hate the faces of heavy users—I don't want to be dead at a hundred, either." He lost his control. "Especially since I've found you! Don't you understand?"

"No; I don't. Zona was unimpressed by his passion. "All I can understand is that you volunteer to compete in a game where you have at most of a fifty-fifty chance of remaining alive. And then, when you happen to survive—when you could ask for Class I, half a dozen beautiful wives, a thirty-room dwelling and a place in Management—you wind up with only the job of assistant to Arven, Games Designer for the North American Continent. I don't understand..."

Gloomily, Dana continued walking with her. "I'm thirty-two," he told her unnecessarily. "As Class I, I'd be dead in less than seventy years. Whichever I chose, as my wife you'd more or less have to go along—Management frowns on mixed marriages. And no backing out or changing your mind." She knew it all as well as he

did. But somehow it didn't seem to convince her.

He was still gloomy when he woke up the next morning, until the special messenger came. When the boy knocked at his door he was glad his roommates had gone to breakfast. He could imagine the commotion the blue envelope would excite, for it was the exact shade of New Mexico skies on a spring day, and only Management ever used that color. His request for interview had been approved.

The messenger boy was tall and fine looking, but Dana carefully refrained from looking at his happy, vacuous eyes as they jetted in the Management airocar toward a tall building.

It was true that, beyond the obligatory dosage, whatever amount of panodyne any Class II chose to take was his own affair, but Dana always felt sick at the sight of the faces of the heavy users. Crazy or not, he couldn't help feeling that there was such a thing as being too happy, although no one disputed panodyne's proven ability to extend life expectancy. For all their power and privilege, it was the one dreadful price Class I's must pay: they rarely achieved more than half the longevity of Class II's.

The boy headed the airocar directly into the cool vastness of the skyscraper's basement and braked within an inch of the white line of the pedestrian ramp.

Dana would have been a great deal more awed at Management's having deigned to give him this interview with the top policy-making Class I of the country if he were not already privileged to work with a Class I who had achieved world-wide respect in his own field.

Despite what Zona thought of Dana's job as assistant to Arven, at the time he requested it, it was a privilege to work for one of the best game designers of his time.



2

IN THE elevator, being wafted cloudward, Dana tried to put his unorthodox opinion about panodyne out of his mind. If there was one factor the stability of modern life was built on, it was panodyne.

The boy turned him over to a pleasant-faced, middle aged woman, who escorted Dana into a large and gracious room with an outdoor, floweredged terrace on two sides. One side of the room overlooked the buzzing hive that was Cleveland and the other side overlooked the restful blue waters of Lake Huron.

Envyng the room, Dana wondered for a moment if perhaps the privileges of being Class I didn't outweigh the penalty. As always, he came up against the chill, irrefutable fact of earlier death.

The woman led him around a corner of the room into a small alcove where a plump, placid looking man was stuffing a pipe. "Mr. Fisher," the woman said, "this is Dana."

The contented-looking man put down the pipe and held out his hand to Dana, and the woman left.

"It's very good of you to give me this interview," Dana said unwillingly.

Fisher studied him frankly with small, alert eyes. "Isn't it," he agreed smiling. "But how could I refuse the Deathball hero of '32."

Dana reflected that Fisher looked just as contented as any Class II user, except for his eyes, which were exceptionally alive. In that, he didn't resemble the only other Class I Dana had ever met—Arven, who generally seemed depressed and pre-occupied. Dana said flatly, "Thanks, but that was years ago."

Fisher wasn't ready to drop the subject. "You invented the radioactive ball, fatal when held by the same man for more than fifteen seconds." He reminisced, "Until that time, Deathball

was played with the old-fashioned pigskin used in the ancient game..."

"It did seem to improve the game," Dana admitted.

"Improve it!" Fisher's face was still placid but his eyes sparkled. "It speeded up the game as nothing had since 2076, when Volpis invented the rule that players should be permitted to use unlimited physical force, and that the game should be played continuously until every player on one side or the other was dead. From that time, of course, instead of a few scattered deaths, everyone who attended a Deathball game knew that of the eighteen men who began the game, only nine could come out alive. Usually far less..."

"Mine wasn't that drastic a change," Dana demurred. "Mine—just improved teamwork."

"Then," Fisher went on admiringly, "you drugged one of the smaller players on one of the teams, and masquerading as him, you played in the maiden game, using your innovation. Terrific," he said, and his eyes narrowed slightly as he looked at Dana.

With an effort, Dana refrained from saying he had slugged the other player, not drugged him. The confession could easily send him into permanent detention in the desert. Except for the games, of course, Management abhorred violence, at any time, for any reason.

Even as in physics the creation of one unstable atom could produce a chain reaction that might conceivably explode all physical matter, so it was felt that, since men were the building blocks of society, the use of force on any one at any time might normally trigger an equally far-reaching social explosion.

"But please sit down." Fisher gestured to a comfortable chair beside his small, low desk. "You're here because of something important and you're too modest to enjoy re-living your great gamble."

DANA SAT gingerly and wondered what would happen to him when Fisher found he was trying to go over Arven's head.

Fisher proffered tobacco in various forms. "Or may I give you a drink? Or perhaps panodyne to make you more comfortable?" He shoved forward toward Dana a plastic box containing the familiar small pink pellets.

Dana looked at them longingly. There had never been a time when panodyne would have been more welcome, but he dared not accept. Even the smallest dose could easily put him to sleep, which would immediately put him under suspicion of being off the drug completely. Since minimum dosage was compulsory, this matter, too, could wind him up in detention. He hoped his flush didn't suggest anything to Fisher, then realized it was odd that Fisher should have panodyne at all. "But you're Class I—"

"So I am," Fisher smiled. "But just because Class I doesn't use panodyne doesn't mean they are forbidden to possess it—"

Dana flushed more hotly, partly from guilt and fear his non-use might be discovered, partly from embarrassment that he had wrong idea about Fisher's possession of the panodyne.

"The laws concerning panodyne are quite simple," Fisher explained unnecessarily, in a kindly effort to gloss over Dana's confusion. "All Class II's are entitled to it—and must take their minimum dosage, at least. All Class I's are forbidden the use of it in any amount, at any time."

Dana imagined Fisher's eyes, as he mentioned compulsory minimum dosage, were extremely piercing as they rested on his face, but his manner was bland. Dana said unguardedly, "It doesn't seem fair that Class I's should be denied panodyne."

Fisher looked amused. "It doesn't seem fair that Class I's should be allowed as many wives as they like, the best and most of consumer goods of

every description, absolute authority over Class II's—" Fisher shrugged. "I won't go on, but you can see there are compensations."

Dana, aware of why he was there, said bitterly, "You forgot to mention the most important privilege—the right to create—"

Fisher looked interested. He reached for his pipe. "Ah, but that's not a right Dana; it's a duty." He looked back at him. "It's why you asked to work for Arven, isn't it?"

Dana nodded, trying to brace himself to tell Fisher what he wanted.

Fisher waited.

"I have another game contribution I'd like to offer."

Fisher raised his eyebrows warily. "A contribution? But five years ago, when your radioactive ball was accepted, you declined Class I status."

"I still wouldn't take it," Dana admitted uncomfortably. "But—my contribution. We're told constantly how much the world needs exciting games—I've got one!"

"I'm sorry," Fisher shook his head. "You know, Dana, that creating is the privilege of Class I's. You're a Class II." His tone was cold. "Every Class II has the right to try to distinguish himself, and if he succeeds he is entitled to become Class I. Otherwise, this wouldn't be a democracy. And we are a democracy—the truest the mind of man has ever conceived. Absolute authority of one group over another sounds like tyranny, but although Class I has absolute authority over Class II, this is not tyranny; because every Class II may enjoy this same power if he so desires. However a man may only cross the line of authority once." Fisher said flatly, "You were offered Class I, Dana. You chose panodyne."

Dana cried, "But why can't people have both!"

Fisher looked at him disapprovingly. "Absolute equality is impossible. There will always be some who will have

more of the good things of life than others. The closest we can come to equality is to let people choose. Those who want a full life may have it, giving up longevity. Living with maximum potency is not conducive to longevity, anyhow. To the masses, who cannot have the fulfillment of an exciting existence and the prestige of conspicuous possessions, we offer the consolation prize of panodyne: happiness and a maximum life expectancy."

FISHER'S evident satisfaction with his system made Dana's stomach churn. He tried to lance the other's self-righteousness. "It's common talk that you feed panodyne to the people so they'll be contented with their idiotic jobs and not go mad and break up some expensive machinery."

Fisher said smoothly, "Nevertheless, on panodyne Class II's live longer."

"But it snaps their minds—they even get to look like sheep. And if you talk to some of the heavy users, you'll find they're almost imbeciles—even though their records show they were normal as children! It's the panodyne that does it!"

Fisher shrugged. "They make their own decision how much to take."

Dana glared at him. "And the games. If the panodyne is to keep people dulled and quiet, why do you bother to capture the best minds the world provides and turn them to designing newer and more exciting games? Why are the games so important?"

Fisher sighed. "Dana, you have something to learn. In ancient Rome, the games were to keep the masses quiet. The Roman leaders handed criminals and Christians to the lions and sponsored the gladiators' bloody arts so that discontented citizens, sated with vicarious excitement, wouldn't turn against their government. Our purpose is just the opposite. We know that panodyne is not entirely beneficial—that it makes the people too flac-

cid, mentally. So to maintain tonus—psychic flexibility and the capability to know aggression—we provide the excitement of the games."

Fisher looked at Dana thoughtfully. "Perhaps since you feel so strongly about this, I may be able to arrange for you to become Class I, even now, five years after your contribution. Then you could submit your new contribution..."

"No!" Dana heard the panic in his voice, knew that Fisher must have, too. "I don't want to become Class I."

"Oh." Fisher glanced somberly at the box of pink pellets. "I see."

Dana wanted to cry, *No. You don't see. I'm off that even now. But I—* His own mind broke off there. He was off the panodyne, but the thought of remaining off it for the rest of his life terrified him. As Class I, he would lose out on perhaps a hundred happy years of loving Zona. He sat dumb and anguished and unashamedly afraid.

"Well. If quantity of life means so much to you—and quality so little—" Fisher rose to conclude the interview. "That's twice you've turned down Class I status, Dana. I doubt you'll have another chance..." His eyes were still piercing and alert, and Dana was forced to admit to himself, a little disappointed.

ALL THE WAY back to the office Dana tried to hate Fisher. What was democratic, he demanded, about a system that didn't permit a man to do his work. His sense of fairness answered that, as a Class I, he would be allowed to do his work. He frowned, and demanded of the object of his imaginary inquisition. What was ideal about a society that needed its best minds set to the task of designing games dangerous enough, and exciting enough to stir people's minds from their panodyne-induced calm?

His own conscience answered him. In ages past, as every schoolboy knew, there had been wars, there had been

crime. War was simply the mass expression of the destructive drives, created by the frustration and monotony of so-called civilized existence, as crime was the individual manifestation of the same drives. Today, too, civilization had frustration and monotony; but today, man had panodyne and the games to keep the demons in check.

Certainly Dana had to admit to the object of his imaginary cross-examination that it was better this way—where only volunteers played in the deadly competitions—than the ancient way, in which it was generally the innocent-bystander type of citizens who suffered the greatest loss from war and crime.

What made Dana's dream-opponent in the argument assume the features of Fisher, Dana realized, was the fact that Fisher looked so objectionably content about everything. It didn't seem right that a Class I, destined to live only half his possible span, should look so content. The only other Class I he knew certainly didn't look that way.

Dana hurried into his own office, pulled out his present assignment, and gazed down at the field chart unseeing. Here, too, he was confused. He had always thought Arven must be typical of his class, since Arven was the only Class I he had ever known.

Arven was far from placid, and Dana had never been surprised at that, since no one would expect a non-user—however privileged—to be as happy as a user.

To complicate his understanding still further, Dana was aware that Arven had been born into a Class I family and could, therefore, cross the line of authority if he chose. It hadn't occurred to Dana to wonder why Arven did not choose, since Arven was apparently not a happy person as he, Dana, was.

Dana made a cross on the field chart on the clipboard before him, aware he was not being helpful to whoever would consider his play for

their game. He lacked any ambition to work, because he had received no satisfaction from any of his previous work.

Tautly conscious that the Games Competition would close this day, Dana resolved to try once more. He would try first to achieve his point in a direct way, if that didn't work—there was always trickery. Trickery, cunning, was not viewed with the degree of disapproval that force was. He picked up the portfolio containing all the information pertinent to Challenge and headed toward Arven's office.

For a Class I, who needed to work only when he chose, Arven spent a lot of time in his office. Dana was jealously aware of the reason: what man wouldn't, with a secretary like Zona?

She was at her post in Arven's outer office, and as was their custom by agreement, she and Dana behaved toward each other with the rigid formality of strangers. Her lovely, impish face was as cold as a robot's as she put through Dana's request on the communicator, but her soft gray eyes had their invariable effect of making him want to purr and clasp her to him. Dana thought, as he left her little anteroom and headed into Arven's office, that they reflected sadness and something he almost thought was fear.

**A**RVEN, TALL and thin and grim-looking, spent much of his time in the office slumped despondently at his desk. He gestured brusquely to a straight-backed chair. "I hope you haven't come to pester me with that game of yours, Dana." He sounded even more peevish than usual.

Dana flushed, but any anger he might have felt against Arven was always dissipated by the realization that his superior was not permitted the benefits of panodyne. Dana hadn't been taking it for years, either, but he realized that it was quite possible that Class I's had burdens that were beyond the comprehension of ordinary

men. Now, since it had occurred to him that Arven could cross the line—lay down his load as a Class I—he was not so sympathetic.

The older man forked his fingers through his thinning gray hair, glared at Dana. "Then you have?" He pointed to the door "Well, you can get out I have no intention of competing this year. Not after—" He broke off abruptly, closed his eyes as though to seal his mind away from view.

Here Dana couldn't withhold his sympathy. He knew the rest of the thought. *Not after having competed for the last four years without achieving even a citation.* It must be a great humiliation, after Arven's brilliant earlier years.

They *had* been brilliant. Arven's fine work has been the real reason Dana that had risked his life in the Death-ball game five years ago to demand the privilege of working as Arven's assistant. But apparently Arven's zenith had been over by the time Dana came to him.

"If you'd just look at it, sir," Dana didn't like to force his way into the sealed tomb that Arven had made of himself, but he couldn't just slink away without even making his try for success. "Maybe if you'd look at it, it would give you an idea." The older man acted as if he hadn't heard him, sitting quietly, his closed eyes now covered by his two hands Dana urged, "Isn't that what an assistant is for, sir?"

"Assistant!" Arven sat up and stared at Dana through baleful eyes. "I don't need an assistant. My assistants need a master. Isn't that true, Dana?"

Dana avoided his eyes. It was true that Arven seemed to be finished; but as a Class I he didn't *have* to create, he was merely privileged to create if he chose. "Just a bad streak."

"For four years? I'm ashamed to contribute any more. Nothing I do is any good."

Directness was getting Dana nowhere. He had nothing left now but the trickery. Even if Arven accepted his suggestion, Dana would get no credit, but credit was not what he wanted, needed. He wanted to see his ideas in action, see what people thought of his games. "Please, Mr. Arven. Send in my contribution under your name, but send it in, I'm sure it'll win."

Arven stood up slowly, not taking his eyes from Dana. Dana rose, too, and although it was a rare thing for one man to strike another in the statically-secure, panodyne-pacified modern world, he felt an instinctive urgency to back away from the rage and despair in Arven's face.

Arven yelled "Dissemble? Take credit for what isn't mine?" He slammed his fist on the desk in front of him with all the power in his meager frame. "Get out of here, Dana. If you say another word about that game of yours—you go to the desert! Get out!"

Dana gathered up the portfolio, fighting an uncivilized yearning to slam Arven back in his chair, make him listen. He didn't mind being humiliated by his superior; he didn't even mind the threat of detention in the desert. What did torture him was the knowledge that he was utterly powerless to obtain any utilization of his ideas. He didn't care about the recognition—the Class I's could have that.

It was unbearable to know that at Arven's order, he could be denied the right to do the work of his choice. If Arven chose, Dana could be sent into any one of the dull, monotonous jobs that drove the workers into heavy use of panodyne. This thought was far more terrifying than the threat of labor in the desert, where the searing sun shortened both lives and life sentences.

Yet, even if Arven forgave him his temerity and kept him on, the future promised endless years of designing

new games that no one would ever know about.

DANA TRIED to hold his expression calm as he was leaving Arven's office, so Zona wouldn't know his pain.

A short while later he knew he had failed when she sneaked into his office under cover of the lunchtime exodus.

Behind the closed door she said tensely, "I've never seen him so angry! What did you say to him, Dana?"

Dana scowled. "I offered him Challenge. I suggested he enter it under his name. I couldn't do any worse than his own." The bitterness left his face and he looked desperately discouraged. "It's the best thing I've ever done, and he wouldn't even take it."

"How could you, Dana?" Her tone was reproving.

"I never did like the way he looks at you." Dana scowled again. "Who are you for, anyhow?" he demanded: jealously. "Arven or me?"

She looked as though only exasperation kept her from laughing. "I love you, my stupid. But I know Arven's pride, his pride is the only thing between—" She stopped and bit her lip, looking at Dana.

Dana was puzzled. "His pride? Why should that be so important to you?"

She shook her head impatiently. "Never mind—"

"If Challenge was entered it would be accepted. And if it was accepted—" He broke off.

Zona, ignoring his gloomy muttering, peered out the door, and seeing no one, slipped out into the hall.

Dana watched her go, and stood still and lonely in the middle of his small office. Even if Challenge won, nothing would really be changed. Even if he was again offered Class I status—" and Fisher had said he would not be—he would still be in the same position, he would be afraid to accept.

But if Challenge were accepted, at least he would have the satisfaction of seeing his game played. He would have broken through the torturing frustration of working without accomplishment.

Dana was at his desk in two steps. He picked up the small, flat portfolio and stuffed it in a large envelope. If Arven wouldn't accept his offer of collusion, there were other forms of trickery. Any contribution to the Competition mailed in from this office would be regarded as Arven's.

If it should win the Competition Arven wouldn't dare disclaim it. But even if he should be crazy enough to, public opinion wouldn't permit Management to throw out the winning Game simply because a Class I hadn't designed it. Once it won, no matter who had created it, it would be in.

Dana phoned for a messenger, it was too late to go by ordinary mail. When the boy came he handed him the large envelope. Whether Arven liked or not, he was submitting an entry in the '37 Competition.

### 3

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HOME, ARVEN walked quietly to his den, deliberately not announcing himself because he didn't want to face his family. But his son was in the room. The boy stood at his desk, at his locked drawer.

Arven said sharply, "Borys! That's private! Or didn't you know."

Borys, lanky, like his father, and dark as Arven had once been, swung around, startled. "Dad! You're home early."

Arven walked over to him, disdaining to reply. Borys had his private drawer open and the boy's hand was in the cloisonne container that held his private panodyne supply. Guilt seized Arven but he kept his face expressionless. "If you want panodyne, you know



there's always a bowl in the living room."

Borys withdrew his hand, first taking a few of the pink pellets. He looked upset as Arven felt, "That bowl is empty, Dad."

"Empty!" Because of his own secret, Arven was always very careful to see that there was plenty of panodyne in all the normal places an ordinary Class I home would keep it. The servants liked to know it was always available to them; and since many Class I's had friends out of their class, it was only natural that a hospitable home should be able to provide it. In years gone by, Arven would have liked to have made friends out of his class himself, but his wife was a dreadful snob and never made Class II's feel welcome.

Arven tried to pull himself together. He smiled at Borys warily. "Well, boy, since you're here—bring your guest in..."

"There isn't anyone," Borys said unhappily. "I have no guest."

Arven stared at him. "Well—Then why—" He gestured toward the panodyne pellets.

Borys' face contorted with emotion. He looked as though he wanted to cry. Then his expression changed and he looked at his father defiantly. "This is why," he said, and popped the pellets in his mouth.

"You!" Arven said in a terrible voice. He came over to the boy and slapped him with all his strength.

"Dad!" Borys put his hand up to his cheek.

"You!" Arven screamed, continuing to beat at the protecting hand. "My own son!"

The door opened and Delma came in, groomed to the last ribbon on her chiffon negligee. She came over to them curiously. "If it's one of your crazy games," she said petulantly, "do you have to *play* them, too? You woke me from my nap."

"Game!" Arven exploded turning his rage toward his wife. "This is no game! Your angel son takes panodyne!"

Delma looked shocked. She put her finger to her lips. "Not so loud," she begged. She hurried back to shut the den door.

Arven watched her in disgust. Her attitude was typical. If he told her Borys had just raped one of the maids she would probably have the girl sent to detention so she couldn't accuse him.

Delma returned to them. "Now what's this all about?" she demanded.

Borys made his own confession. "I do, Mother. I just couldn't stand things any more. School—I couldn't pass my exams... Lydia—she said she'd rather not go to the Prom than go with me..." His shoulders sagged. "I've been taking it for months."

Delma said soothingly, "I don't blame you." She looked at Arven. "It's time you knew, anyhow, you're going to have to figure out how to increase our supply."

"Our?" Arven frowned at her disbelievingly.

"It's high time you knew," she repeated coolly "I've been taking it for years..."

Arven looked at her incredulously. "You! You, too!"

Delma walked over to a large, pink-tinted mirror hanging on the wall, looked at herself with satisfaction. "It's ridiculous. I was starting to get crow's feet. At sixty!" She looked back at Arven angrily. "Why our oldest cleaning woman doesn't have crow's feet. And Nedda's almost two hundred..."

Arven said dully, "No wonder it goes so fast." His own guilt had confused him as to how much of the stuff they were requisitioning each month.

Arven surveyed his wife and son with hollow eyes. "That makes it a clean sweep," he said. "I use it, too,



that makes us all Class II's..."

"Don't you dare turn us in!" There was panic in Delma's handsome, healthy face. "Don't you dare put in for change of status!"

Arven looked at her viciously. "Why not? We deserve it." No one knew better than he how class conscious she was.

"Arven, if you do—I'll kill myself!"

"If I only thought you meant that," he said coldly. But Arven knew she was only talking. As an ordinary Class II, he could never get what he wanted at work. He had his own reason for wanting their secret kept. Arven said shortly, "Instead of having hysterics, make yourself useful. Have one of the suites on the top floor prepared for my new wife..."

Delma was astonished. "Arven! In thirty years of marriage you never mentioned wanting—"

"What's so unusual about a Class I taking a second wife? I could have a dozen!"

Delma laughed out loud rudely. "Certainly," she jeered. "You could." As an afterthought she demanded, "Your new bride—Class I, of course?"

Arven showed discomfort. "No."

Delma said sweetly, "But you know how Management feels about mixed marriages—"

"Management be damned," Arven said. "There's no hard and fast rule."

He forced himself to remain calm, thought of Zona's bright hair and soft eyes. He had waited long enough; as Class I he could demand that she marry him. Once he had Zona, not even Delma's malice could bother him. Mixed marriage was only frowned on, not forbidden. Nothing was forbidden Class I's. "Tell the decorators to use a lot of violet and gray..."

"Violet and gray," Delma repeated with mock-docility. "Gold door-knobs?"

Arven locked himself away from her

unpleasantness, had his dinner in his sitting room on a tray.

THE NEXT morning at work, the sight of Zona wiped everything out of his mind but his decision. He had waited a long time, but his waiting was over.

He summoned her into his office and she came to his desk, her expression apprehensive.

Arven rose, came around to her. "Zona, my dear, in the time we've known each other—you must have had some idea how I feel about you—"

She shook her head negatively, her eyes disturbed. "Please, Mr. Arven—I've a lot of work—"

He smiled at her reassuringly. She was shy, that was all. "Never mind that, Zona I've something important to say—"

"I hear the phone, sir. Excuse me—" She turned to flee.

Arven grabbed her wrist. "That will wait," he said severely. "This won't." Her frightened eyes goaded him. "I've spoiled you by being so patient, waiting for you to come to me. But that's over. I'm asking you to marry me. Now."

Her jaw firmed and her soft gray eyes were finally angry. "You can't make me—"

His smile was grim. At least he knew what made women tick. "No," he agreed, "I can't. But as a Class I with absolute authority over Class II's, I can send you to detention. A few years of agricultural labor in the desert will prevent you from ever again being annoyed by unwelcome suitors..."

Zona looked at him with loathing. "How you must love me, Mr. Arven."

"Don't let's quarrel, my dear. I really do love you. It's just—" He passed his hand over his head wearily. "You don't know the problems I have." He waited.

She looked harried.

"Well?"

"Let me think about it," she

pleaded. "Give me a little time."

Arven said, "Till five. That gives us just time to get to the marriage bureau."

**ZONA LEFT** his office, hesitated outside the door. Picking of some random papers as camouflage, she went boldly to Dana's office.

He was sitting gloomily at his work table, and when she came in he tried to force a smile. "To what do I owe the unexpected honor—"

For once, Zona couldn't joke. "Dana, I've bad news."

Dana laughed shortly. "What other kind is there?"

Zona went to his desk, poured herself a drink of water from his carafe. "I don't know what jarred him into action, but Arven wants me to marry him. Tonight."

"What?" Dana leaped to his feet, seized her. "He can't. You love me! Besides, he's too old! Anyhow, he has a wife!"

Zona shook her head helplessly. "None of those reasons count. He's Class I, he's got us, unless—"

"Unless what?"

She looked at him, hoping and yet without hope. "Unless you can rescind your refusal to be Class I. If you were Class I, you'd be his equal—than I could make my own choice."

Dana looked at her for quite a long time, remembering Fisher's offer of only yesterday, and remembering his refusal. Ever since then, realizing he had turned down his right to do the work he was intended to do in favor of a few vapid decades of vegetative existence, he had been doubting his wisdom. Now he saw his own weak and helpless situation, realized he had deliberately chosen it. He knew then what the Bible referred to when it spoke of a man's trading his birthright for a mess of pottage. But Fisher had said the offer would not be repeated. "Forget it," he said roughly, more to

himself than to her. "There's no chance."

Even Zona's fine poise had a limit. She wailed, "Oh, Dana," and threw her arms around him in a frightened embrace.

The door opened and Arven came in. He took in the scene with enough calm to suggest it was what he had expected to interrupt. He said coldly, "What's the meaning of this disgraceful exhibition?"

"We love each other." Dana held on to Zona, kissed her definitely.

Arven pointed to the door. "Get back to your office, Zona. I'll try to overlook this, if it never happens again."

But Dana held her when she tried to leave. Helplessly, Zona closed her eyes and leaned against his shoulder.

Arven suggested, "Perhaps you'd rather see her sent to the desert?"

Zona opened her eyes, spoke in alarm when she saw the look in Dana's face. "No! Don't, Dana!"

Her feeble voice cut through his red haze and Dana forced himself to put his arms down at his sides. In the secure world of 2137, where everyone had at the very least all the necessities of existence, there was practically no crime. But the most heinous offense for any Class II was to strike a Class I. It was an act that threatened anarchy.

Dana tried to speak reasonably, even pleadingly. "Please, Mr. Arven. Don't do this."

Arven's eyes, which had gleamed when Dana seemed about to go for him, showed disappointment. He called out angrily and two of Dana's co-workers appeared. "Take him to Central Jail," Arven gestured. "He's to be held until I decide on his punishment."

The two men didn't look happy about it, but they had no choice. Dana realized, too, that he couldn't fight the entire world; he went along quietly.

Zona sobbed once, unashamedly, as he left.

THE CELL they put him into was clean and comfortable, but Dana paced ceaselessly back and forth. The torture was watching the sun cross the afternoon sky toward the western horizon. The torture was knowing that when it set, Zona would have no choice but to accede to Arven's command to marry him. Dana made innumerable crossings of his small cubicle as the sum completed its great swathe.

By dark, he was exhausted but still not numb enough to stop thinking. He had come to the point of pounding on the wall with his fists, but that didn't help either. He invited pain, longed for it, to negate the deeper pain of thinking, but the blows only numbed his hands. His mind kept on going.

He didn't really know what time it was when he was interrupted in his pacing and pounding. The two husky men the jailer let into his cell, Dana recognized. They were a couple of men Arven kept on his personal household staff for odd or unusual work.

This time, their assignment was to bring Dana to Arven's home. They escorted him to the den.

Arven was waiting for them. He gestured to a rock maple captain's chair, tossed one of the two guards a length of rope. "Tie him up. I wouldn't put it past him to attack me."

It was not so many years since Dana had played Deathball, and even though there were two of them and they were both huskier than he, it took them several minutes to subdue him. Some of the bricabrac was shattered in the process.

The door opened and Delma's face, deliciously scandalized, and Zona's, horror-stricken, appeared in the opening. "What's all the—"

"Close that door!" Arven roared. "Stay out of here! Both of you!"

The two men fastened the ropes se-

curely. Arven checked the knots and ordered the men from the room. He locked the door behind them and returned to Dana.

One of Dana's eyes had been cut out in the melee and it blurred his vision slightly, but he thought he had never seen such fear and desperation on a face, not even on the faces of the losing team-members during the Deathball games.

Arven went to his desk, picked up a piece of paper, held it up to Dana. It was the blue of New Mexico skies, and Dana knew then why he had been brought there.

"Now," Arven said, with an effort to control himself. "You will tell me about your game."

Dana said reasonably, "You told me never to bother you about it again..."

Arven's face slowly turned a dark, mottled red. "Your life is at stake, Dana. I warn you."

"Force?" Dana raised his eyebrows, winced as the cut eye pulled. "That's contrary to law."

Arven came over, struck him uncontrollably. "Don't preach to me," he panted. "As Class I I have absolute authority over you. Now. The game!"

Dana shook his head, both in negation and to stop the ringing. He never thought that one day he would be glad that his often-repeated pleas to Arven to consider his game had been ignored. But he knew now that if he could keep Arven from learning about Challenge, he might convince Management that the game was his, have a final chance to change his status.

Arven glared at him, helpless, enraged. He struck Dana, again and again.

Dana couldn't seem to stop the ringing in his head this time, and he saw through a heavy fog. Even the pounding at the door sounded faint and far away.

Arven had just picked up a cigarette lighter and struck it into flame. "Get

away from that door," he shouted. "Let me alone, I tell you!"

Even through the jumble of sounds in his head, Dana could hear the saccharine in Delma's voice. "But, dear. We've been honored by a visit from Fisher. He insists on seeing you." In Arven's panic-stricken silence she added meaningfully, "He says he won't take no for an answer."

Through a blur, Dana watched Arven cross to his desk, open a drawer, and put something in his mouth. He passed his hands over his face and hair, quickly bringing it to a semblance of order and then unlocked the door.

**FISHER** entered, accompanied by Delma and Zona.

Arven, who had regained a great deal of his poise very quickly, greeted him suavely. "Have you come to congratulate me on my new wife?"

"Hm?" The genial-faced man was taking in the shards of broken crockery and Dana, tied in the chair. "New wife?" He turned to glance at the lovely, sad-faced Zona. "Oh, no, Arven. I came to congratulate you on winning the Competition; the Committee mentioned how unique your contribution was."

Arven's smile was tighter. "Oh, yes. Quite a game."

Dana watched the two of them, wondered if the truth had a chance. "Ask him, Mr. Fisher, how Challenge is played."

The smaller man condescended to notice him for the first time. He said severely, "I'm sure that, after designing it, he knows that is to be played by two men, the challenger and his opponent. And that whoever does the challenging, automatically gives his opponent the privilege of selecting the means by which the two will contest." Fisher's small, shrewd eyes returned to Arven. "Certainly the designer knows that the contest may be physical or mental, or that it may even utilize

trickery or cunning. There are practically no other conventions."

Dana felt sick. Fisher was handing Arven all the information he needed. Deliberately, and right in front of him, the real designer.

Arven joined in cleverly, "Thus the challenger must be certain that he is superior to his opponent in every skill, or else the opponent will surely select the challenger's weak point to destroy him..."

"Exactly," Fisher agreed. He walked over to Dana, fingered the ropes around his wrists. He snapped shut the lighter, which was still burning on the table beside Dana. "But it looks as though I'm interrupting something unusual..."

Arven said smoothly, "A matter of discipline."

Dana said dully, "A matter of force." He eyed Fisher without any hope. "Supposedly frowned on by Management."

"A matter of authority," Arven said securely, turning to Fisher for a ruling. "Do we not have absolute authority over Class II's?"

Fisher said reluctantly, "Well, yes. Although it's customary to refer such problems of discipline..." He walked over to the gray haired man and stooped, picking up a small pink pellet that had fallen on the floor in Arven's haste. "However, Arven, you're not Class I any more, are you?"

Uncontrollably, Arven struck it out of his hand. His face, shamed and malevolent and despairing, was his confession, before he hid it in his two hands.

**FISHER** cut the ropes on Dana's wrists with a pocket knife, and Zona ran to him, knelt beside him and pressed his battered head gently to her bosom.

Delma was stunned. "Does it mean—"

Fisher nodded. "You'll all have to

go. Immediately. These quarters are for Class I's." He said quickly, "But Delma, you'll be young and beautiful at two hundred..."

Her annoyance was clearly mixed with relief as she took Arven's arm and left.

Fisher found a bottle in the desk, poured Dana some brandy. "I said before I didn't think you'd have another chance to turn me down, Dana, but—"

"I accept! Thank you, Mr. Fisher, I accept! I'm willing to become Class I—"

Fisher smiled broadly. Then his expression became serious. "You see, Dana, when the right people refuse to hold the reins—well, then the wrong people are forced to hold them. It's really too bad."

Zona, too, was smiling at Dana's passionate reversal. "And what about your precious panodyne?"

Dana showed his confusion. "Well, you know neither of us is using it—"

Zona said mockingly to Fisher, "He wanted to suffer life's stresses—see what effect it would have on his creative ability..."

Fisher looked pleased with himself. "I could have bet on that. As surely as I did bet on the fact that Arven, infatuated with a young woman who

didn't return his feeling, and failing in his work, did use it. He'd have to; he couldn't take the gaff without something to ease the pain."

Fisher headed for the door. "Come on, I'll run you both home. Tomorrow Zona can either have her marriage cancelled or corrected to show a new name." He smiled at them briefly. "But the bureau doesn't open until nine."

Dana followed him. "I still don't see why everybody can't have panodyne."

"Still afraid." Fisher laughed tolerantly. "Everybody can. We even let each man make his own choice—panodyne or life. Believe me, Dana, you'll come to agree with me that it isn't how long but how well we live—"

Dana, following him, said resistantly, "But I still— Ouch!"

Fisher looked around. Dana was rubbing his shin.

Zona smiled. "He stumbled," she explained sweetly. "But, Mr. Fisher, Dana made his choice years ago. He's just a little slow at finding it out. Isn't that right, dear?"

Dana looked at her aggrievedly, rubbing his leg. Then he started to grin. "That's right," he said, and followed her into the aircar.



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by

Theodore L. Thomas

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The people of Arret were so much like Earthmen, and their legal development had seemed to parallel ours. So that it followed that Earthmen could assist in tricky legal cases on Arret. But did it?

**H**E KISSED her again and said softly, "Sometimes I could brain the old stinker."

She nuzzled him, then gently pushed him away and said, "I know, Martin. But you know how fathers are. After all, I'm his only child and he wants to be certain we're right."

He ran both hands through his sandy hair and said, "Good Lord, Lee, how certain does he have to be? He knows I'm not a slob, otherwise he'd never have made me a junior partner."

"I know, Martin. Father is just post-

poning our wedding until it is absolutely inevitable; he hates to see me leave him. But it won't be long now. You'll prove yourself, even to him."

"Prove myself! What do I have to do?" Martin McConnel began striding around the room. He stopped and began ticking off his fingers. "I won the Lunar Mining case. I won the Solar Space Station case. I settled the Interplanets Rocket case for a very nice sum of our clients. Those cases helped make Telfair and Spofard the most renown firm of space

lawyers in the country. What does he want?"

She dropped her head and looked at him out of the corners of her eyes and asked innocently, "How about the Transwarp Drive case?"

He stiffened and stared at her and then relaxed and said, "Aw, nuts; you can't win them all." He strode over to a chair, flopped his long frame down into it, and sat huddled forward staring morosely at the floor. He said, "That's the trouble with your old man. He never lets you forget a lost case; as though *he* never lost any."

Lee Telfair moved soundlessly to McConnell's side. She entangled the fingers of one hand in his shock of sandy hair and cupped the other hand under his chin. She tipped his head back and leaned over and looked deeply into his eyes. He stared into her face, and what he saw there made his frown disappear and his eyes go soft.

"My darling," she said, "father is a good lawyer, the best there was until you came along. He knows it, too. The day that you and I marry is the day he begins to step down; and he won't do it until you show him somehow that you are the better man.

"It won't be easy; father is almost always right. But sometime he'll be wrong and you'll be right. Not until then will he admit that you are ready to take his place both with me and with the firm. Don't you see that?"

McConnel nodded. "Yep, honey. I see that. But as I said, sometimes I could brain the old stinker. How long do you think I can wait when you're so—whoops," he broke off. "Someone's coming."

He seized her by the hips, spun her around, and gave her a heavy-handed swat across the bottom.

THE DOOR opened and a thin-faced young man wearing glasses thrust his head into the room. "Say, Mac,"

he said. "The Old Man called and wants you to..." He stopped as he saw Lee Telfair standing straight against the wall with her hands pressed behind her. "That is, I mean, Mr. Telfair called to ask you to join a conference over at the United Nations in half an hour. He'll be there with a potential client—this fellow named Pre that's been making such a splash in the papers. Okay?"

McConnel nodded. The young man flashed a nervous smile at Lee Telfair and pulled the door shut as he left.

Lee crossed over to McConnell with that peculiar lithe and soundless manner of moving she had. She put a hand on McConnell's shoulder and asked, "What's up, Martin?"

"I don't know," he said. "Maybe some interstellar law in the making. This fellow Pre is apparently an attorney of some sort on his home planet, from what I read. He comes from another star system. Everybody's excited because he seems to represent a civilization more advanced than our own; besides, they contacted us instead of our contacting them. That's a switch. Our scientists have gone nuts over their scientists, and now it looks like their lawyers want to talk to our lawyers. That's all I know."

"Well," said Lee dropping her hand. "I'm glad you're in on it. If there's to be contact between the two planets there will have to be lawyers around. It'll be good business for you, Martin. I wish you luck, darling." And she stooped and kissed him on the top of an ear.

He grinned up at her. "Ah, you'll make a fine lawyer's wife." He lifted his lanky frame out of the chair, and said, "Run along now, woman. I've got to freshen up and get ready for this meeting. See you this evening as usual."

She blew him a kiss. He stood and watched the movement of her as she went out the door. He shook his head and ran both hands through his hair



to throw off the effects of her nearness. Then he went to clean up.

When McConnell arrived at the United Nations, the others were all waiting. He went up to the group and stood beside Athelstan Telfair, Esquire, lawyer extraordinary, senior partner of the firm of Telfair and Spoffard.

Tall, erect, topped with a mane of white hair, Telfair gave the impression always of being about to mount the bench; he carried with him the aura of a judge's chamber.

"Oh," said Telfair. "Here is Mr. McConnell." He turned to a chunky man next to him and said. "Mr. Pre, may I present Mr. McConnell."

McConnell took the offered hand and, with a shock, found his own big hand completely surrounded by the hand of Pre. He realized that Pre was not as normal as he looked; there must be at least eight fingers on his hand.

Pre said, "I am very glad to meet you, Mr. McConnell. It is an honor to meet the members of this most distinguished firm."

"Thank you, Sir," said McConnell. "We are honored to have you here as our guest."

**T**ELFAIR introduced the other two members of the group as lawyers representing the United Nations. The group selected chairs and sat down, Telfair wincing a little as McConnell dropped into a chair with his customary abandon.

"Martin," said Telfair to McConnell. "Mr. Pre has come here with a proposition. He will be starting home tomorrow morning. A half dozen of our scientists will go on the ship to spend some time conferring with the scientists on Mr. Pre's home planet. Mr. Pre has suggested that we send a lawyer along, so that we can make a start at learning something about their system of jurisprudence."

"Yes," broke in one of the United Nation's lawyers. "And naturally the

United Nations immediately decided to send a lawyer from the firm of Telfair and Spoffard. This firm's international reputation, along with Mr. Telfair's book, make it unthinkable to select a lawyer from any other source. Why, the whole world knows that—knows that—uh, knows," He subsided into abject silence, the victim of the Telfair stare.

As the lawyers started talking, Telfair slowly swung his head around to look at the speaker. His body turned with his head until his entire upper body faced the lawyer. His face was completely expressionless, yet his manner shrieked of a towering rage. His eyebrows bristled and his nostrils spread wide.

McConnell marveled to himself, although he had seen that stare many times in a courtroom when it was aimed at a recalcitrant witness. It was one of the few tricks of the trade that the old man possessed that McConnell had not yet been able to master.

Pre saved the abashed lawyer further embarrassment. "Book?" he enquired. "What book?"

The other U.N. lawyer spoke up. "Mr. Telfair's book on Extraterrestrial Natural Law. Why even before we reached the other planets in our own solar system Mr. Telfair theorized as to what kind of law we might find on other planets. With astonishing results too, Mr. Pre. He reasoned that when a society has a technology, it must have cooperation and competition between individuals; and when there's cooperation and competition there must be laws to govern the individuals. Since the welfare of society reflects the welfare of the individual, the basic, fundamental, natural law of all technological societies must be the same wherever they are situated. I think that's it in a nutshell, don't you, Mr. Telfair?"

Telfair nodded and started to speak but Mr. Pre spoke first. "Mr. Telfair,

allow me to congratulate you. I had wondered on what basis your fellows selected you to visit us and now I understand. That philosophy, couched in almost identical terms, appears in the books of one of our foremost legal text writers. This is astonishing. Our worlds must be far more similar than we have thought. This will be a most pleasant experience for me." Pre smiled broadly showing a set of gleaming white teeth.

McConnel felt a slight prickle at the base of his spine. Something indefinable in the air made him feel uncomfortable, but he couldn't put his finger on what it was. It was all too pat; things couldn't happen this way. Two planets sixty light years apart couldn't possibly be so identical. Yet here sat Pre saying so. McConnel ran both hands through his hair and threw off the old feeling.

Telfair said, "I am very pleased to hear that. We have found only four cultures and all of them were more backward than we. Yet even with those we could see this theory in operation. They were following just about the same course of legal development as we had undergone. Now when you, a more advanced people, confirm the theory, I am delighted."

## 2

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PRE WAVED a deprecating hand and McConnel could see the eight fingers on it. "Oh not more advanced, Mr. Telfair. Our engineers perhaps are more highly developed than yours, but our scientists will soon rectify that. Possibly we live longer than you do, but again our medicine will rectify that. No, from what I have learned so far, I think our people are very much alike."

Telfair nodded and smiled. He glanced at his watch and stood up and said, "Mr. Pre, I must leave you now in Mr. McConnel's capable hands. I am

preparing to try a case that demands my presence. I would ask for a continuance so I could be with you, except that I have already had three postponements and I'm afraid another would jeopardize my client."

Pre arose and smiled and said, "Your system of jurisprudence sounds more like my own every minute, I understand perfectly. I myself have a case to try as soon as I get back. You go right ahead, Mr. Telfair."

Telfair turned to McConnel and said, "Martin, I would like you to go with Mr. Pre in my place for a few days. Mr. Pre's ship must leave tomorrow, something about the fuel decaying"—Pre nodded soberly—"but it will be back here in about ten days. You come back with it and then I will go. That will give you a day or two to spend on Mr. Pre's planet. Is that all right?"

McConnel nodded dumbly.

"Good then," said Telfair, "we'll say goodbye now. You and Mr. Pre will want to talk awhile." He shook hands with McConnel, exchanged a few more words with Pre, and went out the door followed by the United Nations lawyers.

Pre and McConnel sat down.

"Tell me, Mr. Pre," said McConnel. "You mentioned you were going to try a case. What's it about?"

"Well," said Pre, "You'll be able to watch the trial and see for yourself. It's a tort action and concerns a doctrine of ours we call—let me see how to say it best in translation—the attractive nuisance doctrine."

McConnel stiffened and stared wide-eyed at Pre. "What did you say?" he said. "Did you say the attractive nuisance doctrine?"

"Why yes. You look so strangely, Mr. McConnel. What is the matter? You—Now wait, don't tell me you have an attractive nuisance doctrine here."

McConnel nodded and said softly,

"Yes, Mr. Pre, we do, we certainly do."

"Tell me about it," Pre leaned forward eagerly. "What is its scope? How does it work?"

McConnel leaned back. "All right. The attractive nuisance doctrine says that you can't keep something on your property that is dangerous and likely to attract children. If children get hurt on it, even when they are trespassers, you are liable. Here." He got up and stepped over to a bookcase and pulled down Prosser on *Torts*. He glanced at the index and opened the book to the proper page. "Yes, listen. Attractive nuisance doctrine makes the occupiers of land liable for conditions on it which are highly dangerous to trespassing children. Is that what you want?"

Pre nodded. "Yes. But what are some of the things that make up the attractive nuisances?"

McConnel turned back to his book. "Well, let's see. He flipped a couple of pages. "Here. Uninsulated wires. A telephone pole that can easily be climbed. Railroad turntables. In fact, the doctrine got started because of so many kids being injured by playing on railroad turntables. Yes. And Here's a whole series of cases where kids were injured by dynamite caps. That enough?"

Pre nodded and leaned back shaking his head in bewilderment. "This is incredible, two systems of law so far apart and yet so nearly identical. And to think that your Mr. Telfair is astute enough to have predicted it here the same way it was predicted on our planet."

The two men stared at each other. Again McConnell felt a prickle travel up his back, he was bedeviled by a feeling of oddness, or something out of place. But once again he shrugged it off.

The two made small talk for a few moments. They made an arrangement

for McConnell to appear at the space ship the following morning prepared for a ten-day trip. Then Pre rejoined his escorts, waiting in the reception room, and the group returned to where Mr. Pre was staying.

**T**HE REMAINDER of the afternoon and evening went fast for McConnell. He arranged for his work to be carried out while he was away. He canceled appointments.

He spent a short hour with Lee Telfair that evening, explained what had happened. And although he made no reference to his feeling that something was wrong, the concern in her eyes as she kissed him goodbye showed him she knew how he felt.

The departure next morning was a hurly-burly of confusion. What with several famous Earth scientists, and a politician or two making the trip, no one paid much attention to one long and lean lawyer. Pre made him comfortable in a tiny stateroom and he seemed no sooner to have strapped himself down when the ship sped past Jupiter and dropped into the condition known as superlight speed.

The interval of time aboard ship was a busy one, again no one paid the lawyer much attention. Scientists scurried about the ship oohing and aahing at the air conditioners alloys, engines, calculators, control systems, waste disposal systems, rations, and communications. McConnell busied himself with a device supplied by Pre for learning Pre's language. It was remarkably efficient, and accounted for Pre's astonishing ability to speak the several languages of Earth after such a short period of time.

The first day out, McConnell learned to converse adequately, the second day he became quite fluent, and the third day he could think in the new language. Then late in the afternoon of the fourth day they landed.

Pre turned McConnell over to an

associate in Pre's law firm—a young man named Esp. McConnel and Esp had time for only a short period of sightseeing. The people they saw were all chunky and healthy and handsome. The civilization appeared mostly rural, at least in the region McConnel could see. And it was while talking to Esp that McConnel first found out that the lifespan of the people of the planet was about four times longer than that of the people on Earth.

Suppertime passed pleasantly. McConnel dined with Pre and his fine-looking wife. Immediately afterward Pre excused himself to make final preparations for the trial the next morning. McConnel chitchatted a while then turned in himself.

**T**HE NEXT morning Pre was up and gone by the time McConnel got down to breakfast. Esp stopped by to pick up McConnel and fly him to court. They walked into a domed metallic-looking building and sat down. McConnel looked around.

The familiarity of it shocked him. The courtroom was laid out like a courtroom on Earth; jury box, tables for counsel, a seat for the clerk in front of the bench, the rail that separated the working area from the spectator's seats, and all. Even the draperies behind the bench were of the same somber color. And McConnel's feeling of oddness came back.

"How does it strike you, Mr. McConnel?" asked Esp.

McConnel ran both hands through his hair and said, "It is unbelievable, Mr. Esp. I could be sitting in a courtroom on Earth. The only thing missing are the flags. I can't believe our two planets are sixty light years apart, it just doesn't seem possible."

Esp smiled and said, "Yes, it is hard to believe, isn't it? Mr. Pre mentioned that our two systems of jurisprudence appear identical. One of our

legal writers predicted it, you know."

"Yes, I know, so did one of ours."

"Oh? Well, that is interesting."

The clerk came in and sat down and a few spectators wandered in. Pre appeared with an elderly man and the two sat down and began a whispered conversation. A youthful-looking man came in with a man and a boy; they seated themselves at the other counsel table. A twelve-man jury filed in and sat down in the jury box. The clerk banged a gavel and shouted "Oyez". Everybody stood up while a black-gowned judge entered through the curtains and sat down. The clerk called "Be seated." and the trial was on.

"Now let me see," said the judge, pulling a stack of papers in front of him. "Civil Action 1215-73 is next, I believe. Dra, by next friend, against Tul. Are the parties in court?"

"Yes, Your Honor. I represent the party Dra. We are—"

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Pre. I didn't see you. You are counsel for the plaintiff?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

And you, Sir," said the judge, turning to his right as he glanced at the bottom of one of the sheets of paper, "You are Mr. Adt, counsel for the defendant?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

"Are you both ready to start?"

"Yes, Your Honor," they said together.

"Very well," said the judge with the barest glance toward the jury box. "Mr. Pre, you may open."

As Pre rose, McConnel noted that different confidence that marks the highly skilled trial lawyer. Without a hint of theatrics, yet with a manner that shrieked of a righteous cause, Pre gave his opening statement.

"Your Honor. Gentlemen of the jury. Our case is a simple one. It is simply this: A child has been injured,

and the person responsible for the injury should pay damages. That is our entire case.

"We will show you that an infant has been injured, and quite seriously at that. We will show you that the injury was the direct result of the negligence of the defendant, Mr. Tul.

"Now the negligence involved here calls for a little explanation. There is a rule of law that says that the defendant in this case was negligent. The law says that the occupier of land is liable for conditions on which are highly dangerous to trespassing children. This rule of law is known as the attractive nuisance doctrine. It is a firmly-established doctrine in a vast majority of the courts here on Arret, and rightly so. We are all aware of the lack of good sense of children; they know not right from wrong. So the law insists that adults take positive steps to eliminate those dangerous conditions which might lure children on to the land and then cause injury once they are there. The premises must be free of dangerous conditions which attract children 'as a bait attracts a fish or a piece of stinking meat draws a dog', as was said by one of our famous legal writers."

McCONNEL gulped and turned speechless to Esp. But Esp was too intent on the opening statement to notice.

Pre paused and stared at the floor. He pushed his hands into his pockets and walked slowly back to his chair. Just before sitting down he turned to face the jury. He took his hands from his pockets, pulled himself fully erect, and said in a low voice, "We will show you, gentlemen, that the defendant Tul maintained an attractive nuisance on his land, and that the plaintiff, Child Dra, was injured thereby, we ask that you give him damages." And he sat down.

There was a stirring the court, a

coughing, and a clearing of throats, as the jurors and spectators found themselves released from the liquid flow of words. The judge turned to the defendant's side of the court and said, "You may open, Mr. Adt."

Mr. Adt jumped up. "Thank you, Your Honor." He turned to the jury and said, "My opponent has given you a precise statement of the issue in this case. He has also started the attractive nuisance doctrine. But he didn't tell you that the attractive nuisance doctrine has aroused endless discussion and is surrounded by no little confusion.

"I do not mean to say that is a bad doctrine. It protects the youth among us who haven't matured enough to be responsible for their actions. I say this, even though there are courts on this planet of ours who reject the doctrine as being sentimental humanitarianism. Be this as it may, I will show you that the attractive nuisance doctrine has no application in this case. The defendant acted only as any landowner would act. He had no reason to expect that a child would be attracted by the lode on his land; he was under no duty to guard against childish trespassers. The explosion was not his fault. In short, the attractive nuisance doctrine does not apply. Thank you." And he sat down and flicked over a few pages.

McConnell muttered to Esp. "If it weren't for those hands I'd swear this was a court on Earth. How can—." But things continued to happen in front of him.

The judge nodded and *harrumphed* once or twice and said to Pre. "Is plaintiff ready to present the first witness?"

"Yes Your Honor."

"Proceed."

"The plaintiff calls Mr. Dra as the first witness."

"Mr. Dra to the stand," called a clerk.

Dra somberly approached the witness chair and stood before it.

"Raise your right hand."

He did so.

"Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give in the case now in hearing is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

"I do."

"Please be seated."

### 3

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PRE APPROACHED his witness and asked his name and address, which Dra gave.

Then Pre asked, "What is your relationship with the injured child in this case?"

"I am his father."

"Now Mr. Dra, directing your attention to the afternoon of Four 14, 12,451, did anything unusual occur?"

"Yes, it did."

"Will you tell the jury in your own words what happened?"

"Well, it was along toward the end of the day when I saw a bright light and then a little later I heard a loud blast. Shortly after, my son Child Dra came in; he was hurt pretty badly. I could see he had been exposed to hard radiation."

Mr. Dra stopped and glanced over at where his son was sitting. Pre brought his attention back by saying, "What, if anything, did you do then?"

"Oh," said Mr. Dra. "Well, I gave him first aid. You know, exchanged his blood, shot him full of allilin, treated his surface burns with artine and planted an auxiliary kidney. Then I called a doctor."

"Please go on."

"While I waited for the doctor, I brought my son out of the anesthetic

and asked him what had happened. He told me he had gone over on Mr. Tul's land to play with the outcropping of—"

Adt was on his feet. "I object, Your Honor. This is hearsay of the worst kind; the witness is testifying as to facts stated by someone else. It's inadmissible."

Pre turned around. "Your Honor. The witness is merely testifying as to statements he heard with his own ears. We are not now concerned with the truth of those statements, but merely that they were made."

"It's still hearsay," Adt said. "Furthermore it lies right at the nub of the case. We will show that the lode was not an attractive nuisance, so we can not accept hearsay evidence as to what the injured child did."

The judge pondered a moment, then asked, "Mr. Pre, do you have another witness to show what happened at the site?"

"Yes, Your Honor, I do."

"All right, then, I'll sustain this objection. This witness may not testify as to what the injured child said happened at the site. Proceed."

Pre nodded and turned to his witness. "Mr. Dra, I have only one more question. It concerns the amount of money you had to spend as a result of this injury. Counsel for defendant has agreed that the sum you are about to name is a fair estimate of the costs. It is understood that the sum does not include money for pain and suffering, but is merely the out-of-pocket sum. Will you tell the jury what it is?"

"Six thousand and eighty-one seds."

"Will the defense stipulate that six thousand and eighty-one seds is the cost of the injuries suffered by the Child Dra?"

"I so stipulate," said Adt.

McConnel wondered vaguely what a sed was worth. He hadn't yet had the opportunity to correlate values with those of Earth, although his discussion



with Esp had brought out the correlation in dates and time.

Mr. Pre thanked Mr. Adt for the stipulation. Then he asked Adt, "Any cross-examination?"

Adt hesitated a moment and said, "No cross."

THE JUDGE glanced at Adt in surprise. McConnel knew so well what that look meant; it wasn't often that one so obviously new in the law had enough sense not to cross-examine a witness. The young lawyers always talk too much, and usually hang themselves; it was with an apparent new sense of respect that Pre and the judge addressed Mr. Adt thereafter.

"The witness is excused," said the judge.

Mr. Dra got down and somberly went back to his chair.

Pre spoke up. "As my next witness I call Child Dra."

There was an excited buzz in the courtroom as the erect form of Child Dra approached the stand. His body showed few signs of the accident; a shiny glaze of peculiar looking skin on his right cheek and a slight paleness were all that showed. He reached the stand and raised his hand and listened to the words: "Do you swear that the evidence you are about to give in the case now in hearing shall be the truth, the whole..."

"I object." There stood Mr. Adt.

"What do you object to, and on what grounds?" asked the judge.

"This person is a child, an infant," said Adt. "He can not take an oath; he doesn't know the meaning of it. His testimony is incompetent; he does not know right from wrong. He's an incompetent where morals are concerned. I object to his being a witness."

"Now just a minute," said Pre, getting up. "There is no definite rule as to the age at which a person is qualified to testify. The test has always been an

individual one, whether in the particular case the person offered has sufficient intelligence to understand the nature and effect of an oath. There is not now and..."

"I am perfectly aware of that, Counsellor. And in this case the offered witness can not have sufficient intelligence to understand the nature of an oath. He has intelligence, certainly, but only in a technical direction; morally he is a mere infant as defined by the law. Why, for six thousand years our law has clearly defined the ethical difference between infants and adults. Are we now..."

"Infants," broke in Pre, "have nevertheless been competent witnesses in many cases. In the case of *Whe v. That* it was held that..."

"I don't care what that case held. It's these facts here that concern us. And here we have an infant..."

"Who is perfectly competent. He is..."

"He is not. Why should..."

Bang went the judge's gavel. "Gentlemen, please," he said. "I will examine the offered witness to see if he is competent." He turned to Child Dra and said, "Young man, will you step over here to the bench please?"

"Yes, sir," said Child Dra, and he walked over.

"How old are you?" asked the judge.

"Forty-four, sir."

"And where are you in school?"

"In the Seventeenth Technical Form and the Third Ethical Form."

"SEE?" SAID Adt, with a significant glance at the jury. "A person is an infant until he is eighty-four; this child has progressed only about half-way."

"Please, Mr. Adt," said the judge. "I'll handle this." He turned back to the youth. "Tell me, child. Do you know who God is?"

"No, sir."



"Well, do you know what death is?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you believe that people who tell untruths or do other bad things will be punished after death?"

"No, sir."

The jury stirred and looked at one another. Mr. Adt pursed his lips, and nodded his head back and forth several times.

"Well," continued the judge. "Do you know what truth is?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"What is truth?"

"It's telling what really happened."

"Good. Very good. And what happens if a person doesn't tell the truth?"

"He gets punished."

"You understand punishment?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you understand that this court can punish you if you do not tell the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you tell us the whole truth about the explosion?"

"Yes, sir."

The judge sat back and looked around. "I'm going to let Child Dra testify. Now, now, Mr. Adt, I'm familiar with all your objections. I will grant you that this youngster has a long way to go ethically and morally; he hasn't even matured sufficiently for him yet to grasp the connotations of God. However, he knows what truth is, and he realizes he can be punished for telling untruths; this is enough for him to testify. In view of his extreme youth and inability to know right from wrong, though, I will conduct the questioning myself. Both counsels will be free to object should they feel that any of my questions are improper. Are there any objections to this arrangement, gentlemen?"

Both lawyers shook their heads glumly. *Hah*, thought McConnel, *they know what side their bread is buttered on*. With a half-smile, the judge direct-

ed Child Dra to the stand and got down to business.

"Do you remember the afternoon of the explosion?" he asked gently.

"Yes, sir. Very well."

"Suppose you tell us why you went over to Mr. Tul's land in the first place."

"Well, he lives next to us. I go over there a lot. He has a mountain at his place and I often go over there to study. He has different flora and fauna from those we have in our forests. I used to sit all the time in a little natural seat that was part of a rock outcropping halfway up the mountain. I had a good view from there. I could see almost all of our own property. I could see sixteen lakes, two houses, fourteen..."

"That's all right, son. Tell us when you first found the lode."

"I am. The rock outcropping was the lode, only I didn't know it until after I took Geology 6. Then I realized that the rock outcropping was carnotite."

"I see," said the judge. "When did you decide to put the carnotite to use?"

"**I DON'T KNOW**," said the youngster. "I took Unit Operations 8 and Nucleonics 10 in school. My schoolbooks mentioned that high temperatures and big pressures can be generated by removing absorbers from a supercritical amount of a fissionable. My lecturers demonstrated the conversion of mass to energy, but all they did was run a power plant; I wanted to make a big noise."

"All right," said the judge. "Now tell us how you make the big noise."

"Well," said Child Dra, "we had a half holiday from school, and I had nothing to do. So I thought it would be a good time to fool around with the lode. I took a spot heater, and some titalloy tubes, and sheets, and some lubricated cadmium rods, and a Tod bal-

ance with microswitch and activating mechanism."

The judge nodded and turned to Adt and said, "It's pretty easy to see what happened next. Any schoolboy could figure out what to do with that kindergarten equipment. Is there any doubt that the equipment could be found in just about any cellar or junkpile?"

The two lawyers shook their heads; so did the jury. McConnel's old feeling came back but this time there was a glimmering of reason for it. Way deep in the back of his mind McConnel began to see what was wrong.

The judge turned to the jury and said, "Just for the record, though, we'll have the child tell us what he did." He turned to Child Dra. "All right, son. Tell us what you did when you got to the lode."

"Well, I made a furnace with the titalloy sheets and charged it with the proper amount of carnotite. Out of the top I spiraled a tubing in the shape of a helix of such dimensions that the heavy isotope deposited on the outer wall while the lighter isotope passed on through and deposited on the cadmium rods. I adjusted the spot heater to give a temperature high enough to break down the molecule and also to give sufficient velocity to the curved vapor stream that the heavy isotope would be flung against the tube wall while the lighter passed on through and struck the cadmium rods. The other products, being lighter still, would not deposit. I set the Tod balance to actuate the microswitch when the critical mass had been reached. This removed the cadmium rods and set off the chain reaction. That's all I did."

The judge said, "Well, how did you get hurt? You certainly knew how to protect yourself."

"Yes sir, I did. But it didn't go off when I expected it to. So I came out of the ravine and was walking over to it when it went off."

"How far were you away from it when it went off?"

"About a half a mile, sir."

"I think that about completes it," said the judge, leaning back. "Do counsels have any questions they want me to ask?"

"Yes, Your Honor, I do," said Pre, getting up. "May we cover the bench?"

"Yes," said the judge.

The two lawyers went up to the bench and leaned over it to hold a whispered consultation with the judge. "Your Honor," said Pre, "I wish to establish that the exposed lode was what drew the infant to defendant's land, rather than something else. So would you ask him why it was he went there?"

The judge said, "Certainly, Mr. Pre. Mr. Adt, do you have any questions?"

"No, sir."

The judge turned to Child Dra and said, "Son, why did you go to Mr. Tul's property that day?"

"Well, I had nothing else to do."

"Yes, I know, but why did you go there rather than some place else?"

"Well, I wanted to fool around with that lode."

"Thank you. You may go back to your seat now."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." And Child Dra stepped down.

"Your Honor," said Mr. Pre. "The plaintiff rests."

#### 4

THERE WAS a low murmur of sound in the courtroom. The judge took a drink of water. Mr. Pre walked over to his table and sat down; Mr. Adt remained standing. And for McConnel, the situation was becoming all too clear.

The judge finished his water and said, "All right, Mr. Adt."

Adt said, "The defense calls the defendant Mr. Tul to the stand."

Tul got up, went over to the witness stand, took the oath, and sat down. After the introduction, Adt said, "Mr. Tul, did you know that that lode was exposed on your land?"

"Yes, I did."

"How long have you known about it?"

"Well, I was born and raised there; I've known about it for about 200 years, I guess."

"Has anything ever happened there before?"

"No, never."

"Tell me, Mr. Tul: did you expect any trouble there?"

"Oh, heavens, no."

"Why not?"

"Who'd expect a fool kid to do a thing like that? No one's used fissionable as a source of energy for 5000 years. It's unheard of to bother with such piddling, inefficient methods. I thought our schoolchildren had a little sense. I certainly had no reason to think that a child would hurt himself playing on the lode; I don't see how anybody could foresee it."

"Thank you, Mr. Tul." Adt turned to Mr. Pre. "Any cross examination?"

"Just one question," said Pre. "Mr. Tul, do you have any children?"

A moment's silence, then softly, "No."

Mr. Pre looked at the jury. The jury looked at Mr. Pre, and then at one another. Then everybody looked at the judge.

"Any more witnesses?" asked the judge.

"No, Your Honor," said the lawyers.

"Very well. If counsel will each submit his prayers, we will take a fifteen-minute recess."

The counselors gave the judge and each other a few sheets of paper, the gavel rapped lightly, and the recess was on.

McConnel dropped his forehead to one hand and tried to clear his mind. Esp excused himself. And by the time

he returned McConnel had control of himself and was staring quietly at the bench. Then the jury and judge returned and the trial continued.

THE JUDGE told the lawyers which prayers he was going to read to the jury and then he directed Mr. Pre to give his argument. Pre walked over near the jury box, clasped his hands behind his back, and began to speak:

"Gentlemen of the jury. I do not have much to say. As I told you in the beginning our case is a simple one. A child has been injured, and the person responsible for the injury should pay damages. With the testimony of Mr. Dra, we have proved the injury and we have proved the damage. And with the testimony of Child Dra we have shown that the injury was the fault of the defendant, Mr. Tul."

Pre walked to the other end of the jury box and unclasped his hands and let them hang at his sides. He leaned slightly forward from his hips; his voice dropped a little lower.

"My opponent tried to keep the infant from testifying. However, the judge will tell you when he reads the prayers that you can reach your own conclusions concerning the child's testimony; you can believe it or not. And I know you will believe it. There is no reason not to. Even though the infant has no comprehension of morals as yet, he has no reason to lie. You can feel the truth of what he says."

Mr. Pre straightened up; his voice rose louder.

"The court will also tell you the four conditions that must be met to hold the defendant liable under the attractive nuisance doctrine. These four conditions are:" He ticked them off on his fingers.

"First: The place where the condition is maintained must be one upon which the possessor knows, or should know, that children are likely to trespass. It is clear that the defendant

knew, or should have known, of the neighboring children; the injured child had been there before. It is also clear that he should have foreseen that children might wander on to his land even though he had no children of his own.

"Second: The dangerous condition must be one of which the possessor knows, or should know, and which he should recognize as involving an unreasonable risk of harm to children. It is clear that the defendant should have recognized the risk. When children are of sufficient age to be allowed at large, they may be expected to be aware of ordinary risks of fire and water. But they have no way to recognize the latent dangers of a deposit of fissionables; a chain reaction is so easy to set up.

"Third: The child, because of his immaturity, either does not discover the condition, or does not appreciate the danger involved. It is clear that the child here was unable to protect himself. He just didn't know any better than to 'fool around' with a childish toy.

"Fourth: The utility to the possessor of the land of maintaining the dangerous condition must be slight as compared with the risk to children involved. It is clear that the defendant had no reason at all for maintaining the condition; he should have fenced it or removed it. Although a landowner may usually use his land as he sees fit, he may not maintain a condition dangerous to children.

"And there you have it, gentlemen of the jury. We think it clear that the defendant is liable under the attractive nuisance doctrine. We ask that you so find." Pre went to his table and sat down.

MR. ADT got up. "Gentlemen of the jury. My opponent has correctly outlined the attractive nuisance doctrine, but he has incorrectly applied

it." He walked over to the jury box, his hands in his pockets.

"The defendant," he said, "is under no obligation to inspect his land for the benefit of children. He is liable only if he has reason to believe there will be danger to them; the defendant had no such reason. Even children should know better than to 'fool around' with toys like that. After all, even one as young as this one should have enough mental capacity to look after himself. But he didn't. And the defendant can't be held responsible for such infantile conduct. There was no attractive nuisance here. I ask that your verdict find the defendant not liable." He sat down.

The judge then leaned forward and proceeded to read his instructions to the jury. They were simple instructions. They were pretty much what Pre had told the jury they would be. The judge said that the only thing the jury had to decide was whether Mr. Tul was negligent under the attractive nuisance doctrine.

The judge finished and asked the jury if there were any question. There were none so the judge sent them out to reach a verdict.

While they were out McConnell chatted pleasantly with Esp, telling him how astonishingly alike were the substantive and procedural laws of the two planets. McConnell then wandered up to the bar and congratulated Pre on a masterful presentation. There was little chance to talk then since the jury began to file back into the box.

The court came to order and the judge asked the jury if they had reached a verdict.

"We have, Your Honor," said the foreman. "We find for the plaintiff."

"Thank you," said the judge. And then he asked the two attorneys to prepare an order awarding Child Dra the stipulated sum. The gavel banged, the trial ended, and McConnell found himself flying back to Pre's house in Pre's

runabout. The two of them chatted pleasantly about the trial, comparing notes on Pre's technic and commenting favorably on how the young lawyer Adt had conducted himself.

They spent a pleasant evening talking law. Everywhere the law was strikingly similar, and McConnell no longer felt the oddness. He understood now, and with understanding there was no fear.

**T**HE SHIP took off early next morning. McConnell, his mind relaxed, whiled away the hours reading through several books Pre had given him.

He and the several returning scientists were warmly greeted by a welcoming crowd in the United Nations courtyard. McConnell quickly found his way through the press of people into Lee Telfair's waiting arms. Her dark eyes searched his face as he hustled her into a taxi and she smiled softly at what she saw.

"Lee, honey," he said. "You can order your trousseau tomorrow; we can be married in a month or so."

"Martin, what's happened?"

"Everything. The roof is about to cave in on that old man of yours. Just wait till he visits Arret and sees how his fine theories work out."

"I don't understand. He told me about it, and he seems to think his theories are right—the law there is the same as here."

"Yes, honey. But he missed the most important point of all. Facts. The facts are the thing. Every first-year law student learns how important the facts are. There's no law until you have facts

to apply it to, just like there's no law until you first have order and law abiding citizens."

"I still don't understand," said Lee.

"Look. The law stretches over all men's behavior. Underneath, all sorts of factual situations can be resolved by the application of legal reasoning. The same law can be applied to totally alien situations. That's what happened here; their law is the same, but Good Lord, the factual situations to which they apply the law are outside of our comprehension. Their law might just as well be completely different for all the good it will do us. None of our judges or lawyers could function on Arret, even though they know the law cold—the factual situations there are beyond our reach; they are too advanced.

"These two planets with their identical laws are so far apart that it will be centuries before we can meet on the same terms. Your pop never took the facts into consideration, so he has made a very serious blunder. Not that anybody will blame him; who could have foreseen a thing like this? But nonetheless he's wrong."

McConnell looked out at the passing traffic and burst out laughing.

Lee snuggled in closer and said, "It's nice that we can be married, but I don't think it's funny."

"I wasn't thinking of that, honey," said McConnell. "I was just thinking of your father when he arrives on Arret in a few days. Pre is trying another case then. He wants your father's help on it; it's a breach of the peace case."

————— ★ —————

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## The Disappearing Man

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SCIENCE FICTION STORIES



# TWO-STEP FOR SIX LEGS

A Fable by CAROL EMSHWILLER

(Author of "The Piece Thing")

Illustrated by EMSH

ON THE BEST of all possible worlds (meaning Chim, of course), in the best of all possible cities (Itchwhittle, naturally), lived Igh—free, purple, and twenty one rotations old, rotations round the red sun, that is.

Igh was broad in the beam, tall in tentacle, and wide between the eyes, all three of them. Female Itchwhittlians blushed green when they saw him and fluttered their mustaches. Even yellow, female Itchwhittlians did this, though there wasn't much hope for them as far as Igh was concerned. He was a good boy (in the Itchwhittlian way), and he never went out with anyone that wasn't a hundred per cent purple, as he himself was. He

also loved his mother; and he worshipped what-ever it was right to worship, at the right times and on the right days and in the right way; so you can see, he really was a good boy.

Now he was in love with lovely Lish (since yesterday) and he was on his way to see her. He was going to ask her, (in the prescribed Itchwhittlian way, naturally. Igh was a good boy) about a "big night." He even had rings and bangles already—and the license, too.

When he got to her door, he squared his hips, took a big breath and stiffened his tentacles. He was only just a tiny bit frightened because Optch would be there and would open the

door; and Igh was a good boy, in the Itchwhittlian way.

Of course, Optch opened the door; and all her despicable yellowness came out upon him like shining gold, and made him tremble for fear of being bad. She was broad in the beam, too, and tall in tentacle, and thin in the middle like a female ought to be—and that made everything much worse. And the way she behaved was, in the Itchwhittlian way, outrageous, to say the least. She wobbled her six shapely hips; she shimmied and shook and shivered like any Itchwhittlian hussy.

"Glottle," said Igh to himself, which was "damn" in Itchwhittlian. "One of these days she's going to get herself in real trouble. I could throttle her myself for that matter. It isn't as if she were purple, or anything. The law is on my side in such things. I'm a good boy and I can prove it, so she'd better watch out; and besides, her skin doesn't look one bit like shining gold at all." He thought all this; but all he did was to give her a haughty look, and all he said was, "Lish, please."

Optch grinned at the sides and lead him in to Lish at a slow, undulating walk. Then she served them each a glass of H<sup>2</sup>O and left them alone together. Only as she left, she winked and blinked and brushed a tentacle across Igh's hip and it made him squirm.

"Glottle," Igh whispered, and Lish said, "Did you say something, Darling?"

"No, my dear," Igh said, "it was just that your presence takes my breath away and makes me squirm."

**T**HEN, SINCE they were at last alone, they twined tentacles and gazed into each others' eyes—all three of his into all three of hers.

And as the H<sup>2</sup>O began to warm him, Igh grew bolder and twined a tentacle about one of Lish's hips. "The license," he murmured, "The rings and bangles, I have them all here for a . . . a . . ."

"I know, darling," Lish said, "big night." I've been suspecting ever since I met you, day before yesterday."

"This was no great guesswork since any Itchwhittlian male who went out with any Itchwhittlian female twice in succession, always went with the idea of a "big night."

Lish wobbled her six shapely hips, and she shimmied and shook and shivered. And Igh knew then she was the most desirable female in the whole world (meaning Chim, naturally). He loved the way she shimmied and shivered and shimmied; it wasn't a bit like the way Optch shivered and shimmied, so lewd and all.

"How did you ever guess "big night," Igh said, and, "Do you?"

"I do," Lish said, as was the custom. "Where are the papers to sign? Will tomorrow night be all right?"

"I do too," Igh said, "and tomorrow will be fine, just fine."

As he left her that evening he walked with as sprightly a step as six short legs allowed, and he knew that the world (mean Chim, of course), was his oyster.

But at that very moment, in a dark cellar in the middle of the dingiest and dankest part of Itchwhittle, (if any part of such a beautiful city can be called dingy and dank), there was the sound of laughter. A Itchwhittlian scientist with tangled and twisted tentacles held a vial to the light and watched the grey liquid in it swirl with a purple glint.

"A great joke," he cried, "a great joke on the whole world (meaning Chim, of course). I'll show those fools. They wouldn't believe me; they kicked me out of their schools. Corrupt, they said, a bad influence. Well, now they'll pay and pay and pay; and their children and children's children will pay for treating me that way."

He held the vial close to his middle red eye and shook it to make the purple come to it. "The end of their whole way of life," he said, and he laughed.



Then suddenly he was quiet. "I must find a suitable subject," he muttered, "one worthy of the experiment. And I must find a control—a suitable subject and a suitable control, and females are the most suitable, of course."

He took down a dirty, inconspicuous orange drape and threw it over his hips. And he took, out of his left hand, top bureau drawer a weapon—a small, but deadly thrum. This was proof of what he was, for though all Itchwhittians were free, they were *not* free to carry any weapons, and most *especially* not the deadly thrum.

He went out into the dingy street then, curling his tentacles inwards, and facing towards the back to avoid recognition. He took only dark alleys and kept close to the walls. "I think I know a good place to find those suitable subjects," he said.

THE NEXT night Igh stood before Lish's door and squared his hips even squarer, took a breath even bigger and stiffened his tentacles even stiffer, but it was all for nothing. No one came to the door at all. By the fifth knock he began to feel very angry, for after all, he had the signed license and right there in blue and red (which was the same as black and white in Itchwhittle) it said that tonight was his "big night," with Lish.

Igh was a good boy; but he thought that, under the circumstances, he could open the door and look in, and this he did.

He went into the vestibule, the main room, the eating room and then, even, into the bedroom. And after that he looked in all the closets and under the bed.

Then he got even more angry and went back to the main room and got out Lish's bottle of  $H_2O$ . A half an hour later Igh's six short legs went out, three on each side; he went down on his hard, rounded stomach, and there, right in front of his middle eye,

he saw a piece of torn, dirty, smelly, orange cloth.

Igh blinked his middle eye, then squinted it and shut the other two. *This seems to be*, he thought, *the kind of cloth from the sort of drape that Itchwhittlains of the very lowest type wear—down in the dank and dingy part of town.*

Then he closed all his eyes, because squinted the other two. *But what*, he mused, *is it doing here on lovely Lish's main room floor?*

Then he closed all his eyes because the effort to answer the question was too much for him. His mind wandered for a minute to Optch, and he thought again that her skin wasn't one bit like shining gold at all. He thought of the wonderful working of  $H_2O$ ; and, then, suddenly, he staggered to his feet because it had come to him what had happened.

Dizzily he reached for the piece of orange cloth. *It isn't much to go on*, he thought, *but at least I know I must look in the dank and dingy part of town.*

It was discouraging, and Igh wasn't thinking too clearly. He went up and down the dark alleys, staggering only slightly, thanks to his low center of gravity, but it was getting late and he was getting nowhere at all. He kept thinking that here the night was already half over and it was supposed to be a "big night"; and all it was was this running around in the unpleasant dank and dingy part of town. Everytime he thought this, which was frequently, tears of self-pity came to his three eyes.

Then he came to the very dankest and dingiest part of town, but he was too full of  $H_2O$  to know it. He sat down on some dirty steps. *I may never have a "big night" with lovely Lish*, at all, he thought, *I hope nothing's happened to her.* Then he let the tears flow down and make greyish clean spots in the soot.

Just then, the door opened from the

cellar below him; and someone—someone, female, that is—said "Oh," in a very startled voice.

Igh looked down and there stood a dream—a real dream, more lovely Lish could ever hope to be even if she grew younger everyday.

Such hips, all six of them superb. Such rosy eyes; such a deep-pooled complexion with odd gold glints.

*Well, Igh thought, time enough to search for Lish and Optch later. Tomorrow is another day.* He fumbled for his license. A simple matter to change the names. Igh was a good boy always did things in the legal, Itchwhittlian way.

She led him back inside to a dank and dingy room and Igh had his "big night" after all.

**H**E WAS AWAKENED by the sound of laughter and someone cried in a high voice. "Success, success at last."

*Just the sort of sounds one hears in a dank and dingy place like this,* Igh thought and rolled over.

Then he heard the door burst open and slam against the wall. He opened one eye and found himself looking up into a deadly thrum. Warily he opened another eye, to find the lovely lady of last night seated on the couch smiling. This was puzzling, but somewhat reassuring also. Then he opened the third eye and saw the scientist holding the deadly thrum; the smile on *his* face wasn't reassuring at all.

"I fooled you," he shouted, waving the thrum crazily. "And if I can fool you, I can fool the whole world (meaning Chim, naturally)." He laughed and leaned close to Igh. "Do you realize what you've done?"

"I've just had a wonderful 'big night'." Igh said. "And if it's your daughter, why it's all been perfectly legal, I have the papers right here. I wouldn't ever do anything wrong." Igh raised himself cautiously. "You'll excuse me," he said politely. "I just

remembered I must look for lovely Lish and Optch today. If I find them in time, before the office closes, that is, I may have a chance to get a license for a 'big night' tonight too."

Igh stood up and edged towards the door. The scientist waved the deadly thrum. "Wait," he cried, and Igh waited. "You have found Lish and Optch already, and..." the scientist grinned, "you have had a 'big night' with Optch!"

"Don't be silly," Igh said. He turned toward the lovely lady and, come to think of it, she did look just like Optch—only purple. "Don't be silly," Igh said again. "Optch is yellow."

"*Wos*, you mean." "The scientist pulled out a vial of the grey liquid. "With this I can make any yellow into a purple, *permonently*."

"I don't believe it... I *won't* believe it," Igh said, "not even if it's true."

"I've done it with Optch. Don't you think she makes a nice purple? And there will be others. I'll change them all, all the yellows into purples until everyone's the same." He laughed his mad laughter again then. "And *that* will show the world (meaning Chim, naturally)."

Igh grew pink with fear and shame; for though he wouldn't believe it, he felt it was true, and he had always been a good boy, up to now.

Then all the terrible implications came to him; and he saw that it was not just his problem, but that the whole Itchwhittlian way of life was threatened. He thought of how it would be when everyone was purple, no matter what color they had been born. *How would we know*, he wondered, *the better Itchwhittlians from the worse; or the high class from the low; or the elite from the dirty; or the beautiful from the ugly?* Why, there would be no way to tell at all. His own terrible mistake with Optch proved that.

Here he was with the scientist and

the purple Optch. It was all up to him and he knew it. He was the only one who could save the world (meaning Chim, of course), and he would not let the world down, not Igh.

**B**RAVELY, he squared his hips. Proudly he raised his tentacles. He even smiled. "I don't believe any of it," he said. "How in the world, meaning Chim, have you done such work is such a place? I won't believe it until I see it."

The scientist lowered the thrum just a bit. "It took me fifteen rotations, (red sun rotations) to do it." He motioned towards the door. "I suppose you might as well see my laboratory, since you're right here anyway."

Actually the scientist was delighted to have the chance to show someone around. It reminded him of the days when he had had eager pupils admiring him and hanging on his words.

He lead the way to his laboratory, walking backwards, eyes behind. At the door he paused and prodded Igh with the deadly thrum. "I will defend my discovery with my life," he said, "and I'll have one tentacle on this all the time, and one eye on you."

Of course he did no such thing; for, although he was very clever, the scientist was as absent-minded as any professor—especially since he had been one for twenty rotations. He even laid down the deadly thrum to free all his tentacles for a demonstration of his centrifuge.

Igh drew himself up to his full height. "Aghachagh," he cried, which was "Geronimo" in Itchwhittlian. Bravely he snatched up the deadly

thrum and, in the name of humanity, Itchwhittlian humanity, he thrummed the scientist until that creature fell on the floor and died a terribly painful death, as he deserved.

Then Igh destroyed everything in the laboratory, pouring he grey liquid down the particular drain it most deserved to be poured down. Then he went to kill Optch. It was easy, using a tentacle as a noose. Naturally she had to die, under the circumstances; and, anyway, Igh thought, he hadn't enjoyed the "big night" at all—not really, that is.

Lovely Lish he found in a upper room, safe and sound. The grey liquid she had been forced to drink hadn't effected her at all, and, since it was still early, they had plenty of time to get a license for a "big night" with loads of females, all perfectly proper in the prescribed Itchwhittlian way. And he loved his mother; and he worshipped whatever it was right to worship at the right times and in the right places; and he knew in his heart of hearts (Itchwhittlians had two hearts) that he had saved the Itchwhittlian way of life—which, considering its importance, was equivalent to saving the whole world, meaning Chim, naturally. But he never boasted about it because he was a good boy...in the Itchwhittlian way.

Needless to say, he lived happily ever after, what with all those "big nights" and all; but sometimes he wondered why in the world (meaning Chim, of course), he thought now and then of Optch.

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Another Off-Trail Story by CAROL EMSHWILLER

★ ★ ★ HANDS ★ ★ ★

*appears in Issue Number 7 of the pocket-size*

**DOUBLE ACTION**

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A Department  
For The  
Science Fictionist

# INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

by Robert A. Madle

**TWO GIANTS of Fantasy Pass into Infinity:** It was with a saddened heart that we recently learned of the deaths of F. Orlin Tremaine and Ray Cummings, who passed away within the past few months. Tremaine, the editor, and Cummings, the author, are names that can't help but shine brightly when, perhaps 100 years from now, some future historian will pen a volume titled, maybe, "Early Concepts of Science Fiction." For these two men were, indeed, among those who created the wonder-worlds of science fiction which we shall never be able to forget.

Tremaine, who had had considerable editorial experience with McFadden Publications and Clayton Publications, became editor of *Astounding Stories* with the October 1933 issue, the first under the Street & Smith banner. Clayton had published *Astounding* from January, 1930, but the entire organization collapsed in 1933. Tremaine, an idea-man supreme, immediately inaugurated the "thought-variant" story and, within several issues, *Astounding* was on its way to become the leader in its field. Some of science fiction's great-

est writers contributed stories with plots and concepts so vast that they, literally, staggered the imagination. It was during the so-called "thought-variant era" of *Astounding* (1934-1937) that Tremaine published such stories as "Ancestral Voices," by Nat Schachner; "Colossus," by Donald Wandrei; "The Legion of Space," by Jack Williamson; "The Skylark of Valeron," by E. E. Smith; "The Mightiest Machine," by J. W. Campbell, Jr.; and "Alas, All Thinking," by Harry Bates.

Late in 1937 Tremaine became editorial director of Street & Smith magazines, and appointed one of s-f's biggest-name writers to succeed him as editor of *Astounding*—John W. Campbell, who retains that position to this day. Tremaine left S&S soon thereafter and reentered the s-f scene only once—when he edited *Comet* for its five issues, the first dated December, 1940; the second was dated January 1941, and the other four appeared bi-monthly. Tremaine's affiliation with the science fiction field did not span too many years, but his influence is incalculable.

[Turn To Page 116]

*Vignette of Tomorrow*

# A WALK IN THE SNOW

**by Thomas N. Scortia**

(author of "one Small Room")

"**I** T WILL snow blood red," Dolan whispered in the recesses of his helmet. He felt sobs bubbling in his chest.

He was a lone intelligence, trapped in a fragile sphere of metal and glass with the crimson sun of Antares IV, searing the flesh from his skull with its terrible red light.

"Not white," he yelled. "It will snow red."

Poised in a fantastic stance against a surrealist backdrop of flat, empty distance that stretched out from his figure and the figures of his two companions to the featureless horizon, he wept.

"Dolan, cut that out. Stop talking crazy."

"Bart," he said. "Bart, Skipper... it'll be blood red or blue or... indigo."

"Dolan," the Skipper said, "get ahold of yourself, man. We've got to make it back to the ship."

"Before it snows," he whimpered. "Before it snows."

But there was no longer a radio beam... Hadn't been for two days. They were lost in an alien red world, on an alien red plain, under an alien red sun.

And it was going to snow.

He bit his lip, feeling the teeth sink through the fragile pink skin. His feet had a volition of their own. They moved, one before the other... left, right, left... a penetrating monotony.

The two figures were several yards ahead of him, the tall orange suit of the Skipper with the twin command antennae, the squat yellow one that housed Bart.

Only the suits weren't orange and yellow.

The red sun puddled on their surfaces... flowed like gelatin over the intricate joints, blotting out color, leaving only a horrible ubiquitous vermillion.

"Getting cold, Skipper."

"I know it, Bart. Temperature will be down to freezing soon."

"Three days since we cracked up the shuttle. Two since the beam from the ship went out. How long yet, Skipper?"

"Damn it, how should I know? Soon, I hope. This plateau can't go on forever."

In the inner world of glass and steel in which he lived, Dolan whimpered. Doesn't it? he thought. Doesn't it?

"Look at the clouds, Skipper."

"Temperature's dropping fast."

"And then it will snow," Dolan sobbed.

Millions of hexagonal platelets, foaming red from a red sky, each six-pointed flake an alien ruby design twisted from the water of a planet, achingly light years from home.

But there *is* something familiar in

the universe, he thought, something to hold on to... the shapes of two men plodding across a blinding plain and water, with its shaped crystals twisting in endless variety to the same changeless discipline...

THEY TRUDGED across the plain, feet moving like lead under the gravities of Antares IV. Around them, as far as the eye could see to the horizon, not a stone, not a ripple broke the surface of the tableland.

Like the fantastic vistas of a Dali... *Oh, God, is the whole universe like this?*

"I wonder if there is such a place as Illinois?" he said. "Perhaps it's only some dream. But it existed once... in my sight, my taste, smell, feeling..."

"Skipper," Bart said.

"Keep walking, Dolan."

"I'm going to crack his head if he keeps up that raving," Bart continued.

"Skipper."

"What?"

"If a tree falls in the desert, is there a noise?"

"That's an old one, Dolan. Depends on your definition of noise."

Feet moving slowly, one after the other. Left down. Now right and left. How far to the ship? The warm, warm ship?

*Definitions. Words, words, endless words. But words did not alter what was real... or did they?*

"Skipper."

"Shut up, Dolan. Keep moving. We've got to reach the ship before this weather closes in."

"Skipper, if there is a chair in the room and you leave the room, is the chair still there?" Did words shape the chair? he thought. Or my seeing the chair?

"He's nutty as a fruit cake," Bart said.

"Dolan, I'm telling you for the last time. Keep quiet."

"Been acting screwy ever since we cracked up three days ago."

"It could happen to anyone. He isn't the first."

"I was born in Illinois thirty years ago. Is there such a place as Illinois?"

"Yes," said the Skipper.

*You don't know*, his mind shrieked.

You said "yes," but you don't know. Does the chair exist after you leave it? And the sun and the earth? What about all the people that make up Illinois? The cities, the smell of bakeries and taxis. What about them?

The sun flickered out like a guttering candle. He looked up to see the skudding clouds lowering even as he watched.

They were red.

"It will snow red like blood," he said.

"Dolan," the Skipper's voice was hoarse and so far away, "the laws of nature are the same throughout the universe. Crystallized water is white."

"Unless there's something to give it color," Bart said.

*Prove it*, his mind said.

CAN THE laws be the same on Antares IV and in Illinois? Maybe there aren't enough people to believe in the laws on Antares IV. Maybe there's Something out here that believes differently than we do. Maybe that Something doesn't believe in Illinois...with blue skies, muscle-lax days on green grass and each night the black death and yellow birth of a golden dawn.

"Skipper," he said, "we could have been planted, suddenly assembled here, made at the wreck of the shuttle...complete with memories and names and knowledge. We would never know..."

"Dolan, so help me..." The squat figure ahead hunched its shoulders and turned. The taller figure put out a restraining arm. Behind them, the red horizon ran its eye-straining line from left to right.

"Let him alone. We've got to reach the ship."

They moved ahead.

"You wouldn't know, would you, Skipper," Dolan shouted.

He was running heavily now, trying to catch up with them.

"We wouldn't know. Maybe it's all a dream—earth and its people and the sun. Maybe there's no yellow sun in the universe. Only red...Skipper, it's starting to snow."

"I see it. We've got to sight the ship soon. If this stuff gets too heavy..."

"Double damned that beam. I'm getting cold."

"Damning the beam won't help, Bart. Keep moving."

THE REALIZATION burst upon Dolan with a searing intensity. His plodding run brought him up with the two figures. "Skipper."

"Take your hands off me."

"Skipper," he yelled, "the ship was in the middle of the plain, wasn't it?"

"That's right," the Skipper said. "We came down in the middle of this." He gestured with a heavy arm.

They turned.

Through the thickening light, they saw the distant mountains.

"We missed it." There was a note of hysteria in Bart's voice.

"How could we?"

"Skipper," Dolan felt the cold clutching his ankles. "The ship doesn't exist."

"By heaven, Dolan, stop it or I'll kill you myself."

"It's snowing," he crooned. He looked at his sleeve, watching the heavy flakes settle and melt. With each passing moment, they took longer to dissolve.

"You see," Bart yelled. "White snow. *White snow.*"

"Shut up, both of you. Do you realize we've missed the ship? We must have passed it somehow."



Dolan felt the laughter grinding in his throat. "It never existed. Nor the earth nor the sun or anything else. They never were."

"I got damned good memories of them," Bart's radio voice growled in his ear.

"Someone... *Something* has better memories than you," Dolan said.

Bart's heavy figure turned and advanced on him. "I got one more memory I want to have," the man said and raised his metal clad fist.

"Bart, don't!" The Skipper grabbed for his arm.

"Memories are a lie," Dolan sobbed. He watched the soft flakes settle on his arm. "Lies to shape a world, only..."

His voice was suddenly dull with horror. "Only the memories of three men can't shape this world. It takes much more than that..."

"Look," he cried and thrust his arm under Bart's visor. "Look at the snow... Look."

The metal fist felled him heavily. He lay, feeling the hard ground

drain the heat from his suit, the memory of life from his body.

"I'll look, you maniac."

"Damn it, Bart, you shouldn't have done that."

"So what? Now we can look for the ship without him holding us up."

"What did he mean about the snow and about remembering?"

The Skipper's voice came to Dolan as from a great distance and it held the same chill that was already settling darkly over his consciousness.

"What about the snow?"

"Nothing, Skipper. Just ordinary snow, like you said. Earth, Antares IV, it's all the same. Just white flakes."

He paused and brushed his arm violently. The snow swirled around him, thicker and thicker.

From miles above the cold wall that was closing about his brain, Dolan heard him say, "Five pointed flakes... Just like anywhere else in the universe."

And the Skipper said, "I guess you're right."

## A "New Look" on the Old West

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## FAMOUS WESTERN

*If your newsdealer is sold out, send 35c to COLUMBIA PUBLICATIONS, Inc., 241 Church Street, New York 13, New York*

Given a gravity-screen, just anything at all can fly—but let's take a look at the



# SCIENCE IN SCIENCE FICTION

by Richard H. Macklin, Ph. D.

Last time, Dr. Macklin investigated the manner in which science fiction authors have handled gravity—"The Tie That Binds"; now he considers the case of

## The Tie-Breakers

ONE OF THE touchiest positions in the Universe is the position of the Prophet-in-reverse. The straightforward prophet says, in effect: "Such-and-so will happen." If he's careful not to put any date on it, he usually can't be proven wrong, just because it hasn't happened yet. If and when it does, he's vindicated. If it doesn't—well, it hasn't yet, but...

However, the prophet-in-reverse is in a real jam. His statement is, in effect: "Such-and-so will *never* happen!" As long as it doesn't happen, he's ignored. Everyone says: "Of course it won't, we all know that." But when and if it *does* happen—*wow!*

Take, for instance, the sad case of Simon Newcomb, a prominent scientist of the latter part of the last century. He proved mathematically, beyond any doubt, that the heavier-than-air

flying machine was a scientific impossibility. Came the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, and poor Dr. Newcomb got the Cosmic Hee-Haw.

But the sad thing about it is that he was right. Dr. Newcomb was making his predictions according to the facts at hand; he powered his hypothetical craft with a steam engine! And his power-per-pond ratio proved that the craft couldn't take off.

As I said, he was right. Even today, it isn't possible to build an airplane powered by a reciprocating, coal-fed steam engine.

To take facts-as-they-are-known and predict with them is dangerous if you predict that something can't be done, because someone is likely to uncover new facts and make a fool of you.

Take, for instance, the problem of what is known as the Principle of Par-

ity. In its classical form, it means, essentially, that right-handedness is as probable as left-handedness on a sub-atomic level. To give an analogy, take a tennis ball and start it spinning. If you look at it from above, say, it is spinning clockwise, from below, it is spinning counter-clockwise. The actual spin itself hasn't changed, but the viewpoint of the observer has caused a change. So, said the Principle of Parity, a right-hand spin is no different from a left-hand spin.

All that was fine until two Chinese scientists, working separately at laboratories here in the United States, proved by experimenting with meson decay that the principle didn't hold, and blew the law of conservation of parity high, wide, and handsome.

If someone, just a year ago, had said: "You can't do such-and-so because it violates the Principle of Parity," his prediction would have been, if not shattered, at least well cracked.

Which brings us around, of course, to this series of articles. Me, I'm a cautious guy; I not only like to cover my tracks behind me, but I like it if I can cover them before I get there.

AS I'VE SAID in the previous articles, my purpose is to show that while science-fiction may serve to interest people in science it should not be depended on to give accurate scientific information; nor should its "predictions" be assumed to be based on sound science.

Now, before some dyed-in-the-wool old-time fan starts pointing out exceptions, let me go on record as admitting that there *have* been exceptions—but only a small handful. The mass of faulty science so completely smothers the solidly-based extrapolations that they are hard to find.

Granted, dismissing *all* science-fiction as bad science is "pouring out the baby with the bath water", but let me assure you that it's a very small baby in an awful lot of dirty water.

However—and this is important—any judgements on a story's scientific accuracy can only be based on what is known today. Like Newcomb, we can only say that a steam engine won't power an airplane; we can't be held responsible for some sneaky fellow inventing the internal combustion engine. A rocket won't propel a spaceship faster than the velocity of light, either; but we can't help it if some Arisian named Nels Bergenholm invents the inertialess drive.

In the previous article, we discussed "The Tie That Binds"—gravity. We pointed out, in particular, the weird ideas some writers seemed to have on how gravity works.

This time, we'll take a look at the gravity-nullifiers.

In the May 1932 issue of *Wonder Stories*, that highly perceptive author, Epaminondas T. Snooks, D.T.G., appeared with a little story called "Why the Heavens Fell". It seems that super-scientist Professor Hans von Schnickelfritz has discovered a method of broadcasting power, but its range is limited because of the Inverse Square Law. This, as he explains, is the law which causes radiation and gravity to decrease in effect as the square of the distance from the source.

His well-intentioned but misguided agent pulls a few political strings in Congress and gets the law repealed. Naturally, catastrophe follows. First, the full gravitational pull of Earth, now undiminished by the four thousand mile distance from the center of the globe, crushes everything to the ground. Then—

It was but an instant later that the greater power of solar gravitation exerted its force. The entire United States . . . had been wrenched from . . . Earth by the resistless grip of the sun! And, as the whole solar radiation of light and heat, no longer restricted by the Law of Inverse Squares, burst upon us, the whole heavens became one mass of incalculably-heated yellow flame, into which we plunged, without creating even a ripple, and we were there utterly, instantly consumed!

Ah! *There*, dear readers, is a *story*!

It's a crying shame that the ridiculous phony explanations in other stories aren't so palpably obvious as they are in Mr. Snooks' lovely little *tour de farce*. (sic)

IN MOST other stories, the foolishness is so carefully buried under a semantic barrage of pseudoscientific verbiage that it isn't noticed. Take, for example, the "gravity insulator".

H. G. Wells was, as far as I know, the first writer to "invent" the gravity insulator. In his "First Men in the Moon" (Reprinted in *Amazing Stories*, December 1926, January, February, 1927, and several times since in book form), the scientist, Mr. Cavor, invents "Cavorite", a substance which is "opaque to all radiation". Since Wells assumed gravity to be some sort of radiation—and there was no reason why he shouldn't at that time!—it follows that Cavorite is opaque to gravity. If a slab of the stuff is placed on the ground, everything above it immediately becomes weightless.

A similar sort of insulator is used in Paul Ernst's "The Red Hell of Jupiter" (*Astounding Stories*, October 1931), and in several others.

Now, what's wrong with this? It sounds good, doesn't it? If wood is opaque to visible light, and lead is opaque to soft X-rays, why not something that's opaque to gravity?

Because, as Mr. Wells and Mr. Ernst should have known, such an insulator would violate the law of conservation of energy.

It works this way: Let's set up a flywheel which is axially connected to a dynamo. Now, we'll put our insulating plate under the flywheel so that a little more than half the wheel is over the plate. Fine; now, one side of the wheel is weightless, while the other half is being pulled down by Earth's field. The wheel starts to turn,

and will keep turning. Its r.p.m. will depend on the weight of that part of the wheel which is not over the plate, and the resistance of the back EMF of the dynamo. And what do we have? The dynamo is turning out all kinds of nice electrical power—for nothing!

That's not only perpetual motion, it's energy from nowhere!

Arthur C. Clarke partially explained the fallacy in one of his tales from the White Hart, "What Goes Up..." (*Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, January 1956). The scientist, (whom Mr. Clarke, with a light touch, calls Dr. Cavor!) is working in Australia with an atomic generator. Something goes wrong, and an antigravity field is generated around the reactor.

All the matter inside a twenty-foot-radius sphere had been made weightless, and the enormous amount of energy needed to do this had been extracted . . . from the uranium in the pile.

If you remove an object's weight, that's precisely equivalent to taking it clear outside Earth's gravity. And any rocket engineer will tell you how much energy that requires.

(I presume, at this point, that Mr. Clarke means removing the object to such a distance that Earth's pull is negligible, since it is impossible to escape a gravitational field completely.)

Mr. Clarke continues:

To take an object clear away from Earth requires as much work as lifting it *four thousand miles* against the steady drag of Earth's gravity. . . . From an energy point of view, therefore, the weightless reactor was outside the Earth's gravity field. It was as inaccessible as if it was on top of a four-thousand-mile-high mountain.

Naturally, Dr. Cavor wants to get to the reactor and shut it off. He finally has to rig up a hydraulic ram that will push him the twenty feet. The ram is powered by a Deisel engine, and it takes enormous amounts of fuel—the same amount of fuel it would require to push him four thou-

sand miles straight up against a one-gravity field. As soon as he is within the field, he feels as though he's being pushed up, instead of horizontally. The reactor building looks as though it's over his head.

The upshot of the whole thing is that just as he's about to reach the building, he falls off the end of the ram. He "falls" twenty feet—horizontally. But, energy-wise, it's the same as falling four thousand miles vertically. Naturally, within a very few seconds, he's traveling with meteoric speed, and simply burns up in the air.

The story of Dr. Cavor is told by one of the characters in Mr. Clarke's story, and Clarke admits that there are "six fallacies of a fundamental nature" in the tale. But since he leaves it to the reader to discover them, why should I spoil his fun?

I'll give you one of them, though, as a hint. If Dr. Cavor were falling in a one-g field, in which twenty feet was equal to four thousand miles, he wouldn't be moving through the air anywhere near fast enough to burn up, regardless of how logical it may sound. If he were, he'd have been blown off the ram by a 200 mile-an-hour wind long before he got there!

**T**HERE ARE other methods of overcoming gravity. One of the early methods was described by Cyrano de Bergerac. It seems that the prophet Elijah found a method of getting to the moon; he sat in an iron chair and threw a magnet toward the moon. The magnet pulled him up; and as soon as he caught up with the magnet, he'd throw it again. I think anyone can see that it wouldn't work, but Dr. David H. Keller, in his "The Flying Fool" (*Amazing Stories*, July 1929), had his lead character try a similar trick. He knew that two magnets placed so that their like poles are opposed to each other will be mutually repelled. The idea was, in es-

sense, to be repelled by a magnet and pull it up with you! Dr. Keller, however, didn't let his character get around to actually trying it, so perhaps he wasn't being serious.

There are a great many stories in which the antigravity device is run by a generator of some kind which energizes it. Edmond Hamilton's "Cities in the Air" (*Air Wonder Stories*, November, December 1929); Capt. S. P. Meek's "The Red Peril" (*Amazing Stories*, September 1929); Philip F. Nowlan's "A r m a g e d d o n—2419" (*Amazing Stories*, August 1928); E. E. Smith's "Skylark of Space" (*Amazing Stories*, August, September, October 1928) and James Blish's novel, "Earthman, Come Home", all use powered antigravity. Since this involves no physical paradox, we must simply say that it is magic; we don't know enough about gravity to argue with a concept like that. None of them, however, are based on known science.

Then, there are the gadgets that make a given object weightless. "The Floating Island of Madness" by Jason Kirby, (*Astounding Stories of Super Science*, January 1933) tells about a city which is built of "Fleotite", which is "not only lighter than air, but lighter than ether." Such a statement is scientifically meaningless.

"Sam Graves' Gravity Nullifier" by George F. Stratton (*Amazing Stories*, August 1929) is concerned with a gadget similar to the flywheel we mentioned previously. It's an endless belt of weighted barrels which are made weightless at the bottom of the chain and re-weighted again at the top. This, of course, produces perpetual motion, and is no better than Cavorite.

"Tricky Tonnage" by Malcom Jameson (*Astounding Science-Fiction*, December 1944) utilizes a "graviton conductor" which drains all the "gravitons" out of something, leaving it weightless. There's no scientific basis for gravitons; but since they always seem to run downhill through the con-

ductor, we can't carp about it on logical grounds.

Another way to make things weightless was used in "When the World Went Mad" by Robert M. Sherin (*Amazing Stories Quarterly*, 1928). By speeding up the rotation of the Earth with atomic energy, the villain makes the globe spin so fast that centrifugal force at the equator equals the gravitational pull. Unfortunately such a trick would completely shatter the Earth; it would do a great deal more damage than the author seems to think it would.

There are literally dozens of stories in which antigravity is used, but as far as modern science is concerned, they are all magic. Today, we have,

as yet, no inkling of what would be required to decrease or modulate the gravitational attraction of a given mass. Until we do, we'll just have to put antigravity in the same compartment as the interstellar drive.

There is one story, however, which I'd like to mention here—"The De-gravitator" by Ralph Milne Farley (*Amazing Stories*, March 1932).

The inventor of the gadget has an accident before he explains how it works.

"The principle," he says, "is—"

And then he dies.

Well, that's one way of getting out of a tight spot, Mr. Farley!

————— ★ —————

### There's Many A Slip . . .

Memo to Editors, Typesetters,  
Proofreaders, Etc.:

On page 7 of the mss. of "Quick Freeze," the symbol for Carbon Dioxide was given as CO<sub>2</sub>.

On page 9, column 2, of the May *Science Fiction Quarterly*, the symbol for Carbon Dioxide appears as CO<sup>2</sup>.

The former means Carbon Dioxide. The latter means Carbon Oxide to the Second Power, which may be good math but is miserable chemistry.

Darn it, this never would have happened in *Science Wonder Stories*.

*Don't blame the Typesetters or Proofreaders, Bob. I just checked your original mss., and find to my horror that, doubtless during an attack of non corpus mentis, I was the culprit.*

*The typesetters, in accordance with the tradition of their noble trade, followed the copy. The proofreader checked the original mss., and decided that it must be right, since the editor had made the change.*

*To all our readers, and in particular to parents and teachers, I humbly apologize for this bit of unintentional misinformation.*

Cordially,  
Robert Silverberg

Miserably,  
Robert A. W. Lowndes

He was an honorable assassin, who asked only to be left alone with his victim . . .

# A MATTER OF PRIVACY

by Thomas E. Purdom

THE GUARD at the gate had been told not to search anyone. If he had searched Conrad, he would have found a pistol, a switch-blade knife and a vial of poison.

"Go ahead," the guard said. "You and the other guy are the last two on the list; the truck'll take you right out."

Conrad picked up his linen bag and climbed into the back of the truck. The man perched on the narrow seat was thin and nervous looking.

"Going to Ganymede?" Conrad asked. This was Jenkins, the man he was supposed to kill.

The young man nodded. "It's a bad time, but I'm going."

"What's the matter? Afraid they'll start a war?"

"Aren't you?"

Conrad stroked his handle-bar mus-

tache. "Why should they start a war over independence? They're just as self-governing as the rest of the Federation."

"People will do anything," Jenkins said. "Sometimes they don't know what they're doing until it's too late."

They were both acting. Conrad was an agent of the Solar Federation; he knew that the Republic of the Jovian Moons was about to secede and start an interplanetary civil war. Jenkins was a Jovian courier; he carried the message that would set off that war. That was why Jenkins had to be killed; that was why Conrad had been placed on this ship, only a month before he was due for retirement.

The truck slammed to a halt beside their spaceship's blasting pit. They tipped the driver and rode up the gantry crane.





It was cool inside the passenger compartment. As he secured his bag in the locker under his couch, the man lying on the couch below waved a hand at him. "Welcome aboard. You just about didn't make it."

"Almost wish I hadn't," Conrad said; "I'm getting too old to be running around in space."

He lifted himself onto the couch and looked around. On this stripped-down express ship, the passenger compartment was about the size of a small living room. In that space he would have to live for five weeks with six other men. In that space, with those men, he

would have to kill a man without being detected.

If he didn't kill his man, the worst war in history would begin; if he killed him and got caught, he would face trial and execution. The Federation, of course, could not accept responsibility for his actions.

"Small, isn't it?" Jenkins said. His couch was directly across the room.

"Yes," Conrad agreed. "But I guess we'll get used to it."

"Probably. Only I hope you aren't one of those people who can't live without privacy."

*The only privacy I want, Conrad thought sadly, is privacy in which to kill you.*

THEY WERE climbing out of the atmosphere, the ship's booster stage thundering behind them. The passengers lay in their couches, totally absorbed in the business of enduring the acceleration. It wasn't high—less than four g's—but it wasn't comfortable either. And it was scheduled to rise to a point at which they would all probably black out.

Before that happened, Conrad intended to kill Jenkins.

It was the perfect moment; no one was watching, and the roar of the motors would cover the gun shot. His hand crawled inside his jacket; he pulled out the little assassin's pistol that was made for situations like this. It held two shots, and at short range its poisonous bullet would kill a man wherever it hit.

Jenkins was lying directly across the compartment from him, their couches on the same level. He was breathing heavily and staring upward with dull eyes; his lips were pulled back in a tight grimace.

Conrad felt that same grimace on his own lips and it fitted the role of the predatory animal he had become. The gun lay across his chest and he shoved

it forward so the barrel extended over the edge of the couch. He didn't want any telltale burns on his face.

Pointing the gun like it was an extension of his finger, he squeezed the trigger, pulling it slowly back so it would go off before he knew it. A spark flashed briefly and over the roar of the engines he heard a dull *pow* near his ear.

And at that moment the ship dropped its booster and the rising acceleration dropped momentarily to zero. The bullet sped across the room and, instead of arcing its path in obedience to the pull of the now non-existent acceleration forces, it skimmed a foot over its target's body and shattered harmlessly against the wall.

*I'm getting old*, Conrad thought. *I should have thought about the booster.*

Once again he squeezed the trigger; only this time there were black dots in front of his eyes. The second stage engines had cut in and were climbing rapidly to peak acceleration, nine times the force of gravity.

His aging heart sluggishly pumped suddenly-heavy blood to his brain. His fingers, at the furthest distance from the struggling heart, grew limp and the gun fell from his hand, to land with a thundering crash on the rear bulkhead. His brain darkened as the blood flowed too slowly along the arteries of his neck.

Everything became dark.

**THE CAPTAIN** was floating beside him. "Are you all right, Mr. Conrad?"

The world was covered with red dots, and seemed very confused. He closed his eyes, then opened them and closed them again. His stomach churned with the nausea of weightlessness. He was falling, falling, falling down an endless hole.

"Let me have a space-sick pill," he said. He managed to grin when he said it.

The crew-cut young captain smiled. "Sure," he said. "Had one ready for you."

"Guess I'm getting a little too old for space travelling," Conrad said; "heart's not what it used to be." He took the pill and swallowed it. His stomach began to calm down.

"You're okay, sir. Some of the younger passengers are just now coming out of it."

"Captain! Captain!"

The Captain turned around and Conrad turned his head. Across the compartment, Jenkins was writhing under his safety straps.

"Excuse me," the Captain said. He shoved off from the couch and floated across the room. "What's the matter, old fellow?" he asked. "Space-sick?"

"I'm falling," Jenkins said. "I'm falling."

His voice was hysterical. The Captain slapped his face hard. "Sorry," he said. He handed the young man a pill. "Unstrap, and take a look around; get yourself oriented."

Jenkins unstrapped and sat up. He shook his head and closed his eyes. Then the eyes opened and met Conrad's. Conrad made himself smile and look friendly. "First trip?" he asked.

A nod.

"You'll get used to it."

He was fully awake now and at home in his environment. His mind was thinking rapidly about the gun. As soon as there was no one watching, he dropped his eyes for a second and glanced at the rear of the ship.

The gun rested in a small dent. The slight gravitational attraction possessed by its own mass and the mass of the ship kept it clinging to the bulkhead. Eventually it would float free.

In a few minutes someone was bound to spot it; and as soon as they did, they would know there was a killer on board.

"Captain," he said, stroking his mustache, "how about showing us around

the control room? It may help us get our minds off our stomachs until we get used to things."

"I don't see why not. Would the rest of you gentlemen like to take a look around? And what say we introduce ourselves? I'm Captain Sam Barclay."

"Michael Conrad," Conrad said. "A sort of second rank executive for Interplanetary Mines."

The man on the bunk under his undid his straps and floated into the center of the room. "John Watt," he said. "Plumbing salesman." He was big and husky, and he looked as if he'd been around a lot; he smiled when he said he was a plumbing salesman.

The others introduced themselves and the Captain shook hands with them all. None of them saw the gun.

"Well, I hope you like it on board the *Vulcan*," the Captain said. "She's not big, and she's not luxurious, but she's the fastest ship in space."

"That's good," Jenkins said. "The quicker this trip is over, the happier I'll be."

"You'll get used to it," Conrad told him.

The younger man shrugged his bony shoulders. "Let's look at the control room," he said. "Maybe that'll be interesting."

**THEY FLOATED** into the control room, and Conrad took up the rear. The other two crewmen greeted them with polite smiles. Captain Barclay did his best to explain the workings of the ship.

After listening for five minutes, Conrad muttered some ancient joke and began to slip out the door to go to the men's room, which was in the rear of the ship. As he went out, Watt stepped out of his way and glanced out the door.

"Say," the businessman said, "isn't that a gun?"

Conrad froze. "Where?"

"Up against the rear—what do you call it, the rear wall?"

"Bulkhead," Barclay said. He kicked off from the front of the ship and passed through the group. "It is a gun," he said. He shoved off from the door in a long, easy glide and caught the rear bulkhead on his shoulder. When he looked up, the gun in his hand, his face was boyishly tense.

"All right," he said, "whose is it?"

Nobody answered.

"I know something about guns," Conrad said. "What make is it?" He was playing innocent, as if he'd never seen that gun before in his life, and was being very helpful.

"An Italian Morati," the Captain said. "With one bullet fired and one in the chamber. Does anybody know anything about this?"

Somebody brushed past Conrad; Jenkins tumbled awkwardly across the room and banged himself on his couch. His face turned red and his lips grew tight when he saw the little mark above his bunk. "Somebody took a shot at me," he said.

The Captain turned on him. "Why would anybody do that?"

Jenkins seemed to hesitate, then made up his mind. "I'm a courier," he said. "I'm carrying an important message to Ganymede; 'somebody doesn't want me to get there.'"

"Who are you working for?" Watt asked. "The Federation or the Jovies?"

"Why you Feddy tyrant," somebody said. "Who are you calling a Jovie?"

"Shut up," the Captain barked; "there'll be no political riots on my ship." He turned to Jenkins. "And no political murders either."

His eyes swept the group. Conrad met his gaze with just the right mixture of awkwardness and surprised innocence; playing the man who always feels guilty, no matter how innocent he is. "Quite right, Captain," he said. "I think you should take im-

mediate measures to protect all your passengers."

"The rest of you don't have to worry," Jenkins said. "I'm the killer's target."

"But which side are you on?" Watt persisted.

"That's my business. But whichever side I'm on—what I'm carrying is enough to mean peace or war. So you'd all better help me get through."

"But what if you're on the side we oppose?" Conrad asked. "Maybe we should let you die."

"That's why I'm not talking."

He was clever. Under that youthful, skinny-intellectual appearance he was clever and could be brave. Conrad felt the thrill of the hunter when he suddenly discovers he's stalking big game.

"We go on an emergency sleeping schedule immediately," the Captain said. "From now on until we hit Ganymede there will always be three men awake." He looked at Jenkins. "Does that sound all right?"

Jenkins nodded. "That's enough for a start." He checked the group with frightened eyes. "Whichever of those men is out to kill me, he'll have a hard time doing it here."

"You've got a point," Watt said.

Conrad nodded agreement and checked off the weapons still in his arsenal.

He had a switch-blade knife and a bottle of poison.

And five weeks to think.

**T**HE POISON idea was dropped immediately; every mealtime, the Captain had Jenkins switch plates with a different person. Conrad thought of waiting until his turn came, then dropping the poison in as he handed his plate to Jenkins.

He gave that up as soon as he thought about what happened to liquids in free fall. They didn't drop quietly into plates and glasses; they just spread all over the room.

Sometimes, during his sleeping-period, he lay in his bunk and stared into the darkness and thought. Jenkins slept the same time he did, and every once in awhile he saw a ray of light reflected in the courier's eyes. He wondered if his own eyes shone now and then, looking to his quarry like the yellow eyes of an old tiger stalking through the darkness.

There was always somebody on duty in the control room; there were always at least two passengers awake, ready to spread the alarm if anyone moved toward Jenkins' bunk. In that bare little room, you couldn't move three feet without being spotted.

You couldn't strangle your man in the night, because they'd stop you before you were through.

You couldn't shoot him, because you didn't have a gun.

You couldn't knife him, because—even if you could get to him—you wouldn't have time to wash the blood off before they spotted you.

His major enemy was not Jenkins; it was this environment. How, in a space the size of a small living room, with three men constantly awake, did you commit murder without being detected?

Of course he could do it in the open, and let them catch him; and it that was the only way to prevent a war, he'd do it. Conrad hated war with everything in him; he hated it—as only man who has really known danger and violence and killing can.

But Conrad wanted to live, too; he was fifty-five years old, and he'd never had a home or a piece of land to call his own. In another month, he was supposed to retire; he had been planning to buy some land, build a house, and get to know his neighbors. He'd been planning on peace and a few years of lying in the sun.

He wanted to live very much.

So he thought about getting one of

the "guards" to help him; and he circulated among the passengers, drawing them out on their political beliefs.

**TWO DAYS** before, the ship was supposed to take up orbit around Ganymede. He had been twisting ideas around for too long, it was time to take action. Desperate action but action nonetheless.

He got up from his bunk during sleeping period. Watt and another man were playing chess by the dim light in the front of the darkened passenger compartment.

"Who's there?" Watt called out.

"Conrad," he said; "just going to the rest room."

"Then have a good rest. It's my company's plumbing."

He smiled and went into the rest room. He turned on the light and waited for a few minutes. Then he came out of the little cubicle and drifted up to where Watt was floating over the chess board.

"Got a minute?" he asked.

Watt looked up. "Whats the matter?"

"There's something wrong with the faucet; I thought maybe you could fix it."

"I could use a change," Watt said. He made a move and grinned at his opponent. "It'll take you twenty minutes to find an answer to that one. Excuse me."

They drifted to the rear of the ship and Conrad let Watt go into the closet like room ahead of him. Then he ducked in and shut the door; his hand slipped to the sheathe concealed over his stomach and the knife clicked open in his palm.

Watt turned around. His eyes widened and his mouth started to open.

"Don't make a sound," Conrad said. "I don't want to kill you, but I will if I have to." He could feel his jaw

pushing forward and the skin tightening around his eyes.

"So it's you," Watt said. "I'd never have thought it." He frowned. "How do you intend to kill him without Al seeing you?"

"I'm not going to kill anybody right now," Conrad said. "I just want to talk; the knife is to make sure you listen until I'm done."

"What if I yell for help?"

"You'll die, and then I'll take care of Jenkins." It was flat, hard. The voice of a man willing to do the regrettable but necessary thing.

Watt looked angry. "I don't like being threatened," he said "But talk."

"Jenkins is a courier for the Jovians," Conrad said. "He's carrying a message that will mean war if he gets through; he's got to be killed."

"What are you?"

"Intelligence agent for the Federation." He pulled his ID card out with his free hand. "See?"

Watt looked the card over. "What's this message?" he asked.

"The Federation battle fleet is getting ready to move on the Jovian Moons. If the Jovians know the date, they'll launch their own attack when the fleet is between Earth and Jupiter. We won't have anything to stop them."

"That's crazy. Don't they know we'll bomb them if they attack us?"

"Tell that to their President. All I know is that they'll do it if Jenkins gets through. Now will you help me stop him?"

"You want me to help you kill a man?"

Conrad nodded.

"How? What do you want me to do?"

"Leave your post while you're on guard next time. I'll knock out your partner while you're back here and by the time you come out Jenkins will be dead. That's all you'll have to do."

WATT SCRATCHED his head with a strikingly rural gesture. "I don't know," he said. "It seems to me as if I'd be as responsible for killing him as you."

"There'll be a war if he lives."

"I know. Only—only *killing*?"

"Can you think of anything else?"

"No; but that doesn't make it any easier."

Conrad understood. He knew that he, himself, was something of a fanatic, a man willing to go to any lengths to see that humanity remained united and at peace. He saw the smoking cities, the crying children, and the parted lovers; and to him, the life of a single man seemed a small price to pay. If this was a flaw in his character, it was one that made it possible for him to do the necessary work he did.

Watt was different. Watt saw the single man, the immediate action, the blood gushing from the slit throat. "No," the salesman said. "I couldn't live with that on my conscience."

"But you believe the President of the Jovian Republic is leading his people into a foolish war. Don't you?"

"Yes; yes, I know. But this is something I just couldn't do."

"Not even to prevent a war?"

"I don't know what war means; I do know what murder means."

"I understand," Conrad said. He was bitterly angry but he did understand.

"I won't interfere. I won't help, but—do what you want."

"Isn't that inconsistent?"

"I only know how I feel."

Conrad put the knife away. "All right," he said; "don't let it worry you."

"What are you going to do?"

"There won't be any war. I'll promise you that much."

"But what are you going to do?"

He shrugged. "I'll think of something."

They went back to their places and

Conrad thought about the compromises men make with their consciences. He had already thought of something; there was only one other course of action left.

It would mean his death, of course.

He had decided to die.

Tomorrow, or some time before they landed, he would attack Jenkins and knife him. They would arrest him and eventually he would be executed; but there would be no revolt by the Jovian Republic and no war.

HE LAY in his couch and tried not to think about it. In a few months he would be hanged or electrocuted; before that, he would spend some time in a cold cell. There would be no lying in the sun, no house in the country, no neighbors to get acquainted with.

It was something you had to accept—an unpleasant but necessary duty. His nerves were tight and he could feel his hands trembling in the darkness.

For all his brave words to himself, death was not just an unpleasantness; it was final oblivion. It was something so terrible no man could ever really imagine it.

He didn't want to die. He was a human being, and no human being really wants to die.

His mind stirred restlessly. Faced with extinction, it riffled through the card file and computing machine of his brain, speeding up processes that might take weeks, searching for the fact or idea that would mean survival.

And there it was.

It was standing there in front of him, and he wondered why he had forgotten it. It was something he had learned long ago during his training period—a method of assassination used by the French Resistance during that much romanticized Second World War.

There was only one place where you could kill a man right out in the open and under the eyes of several people.

It took a few minutes planning and

then he knew what he was going to do. It would be dangerous but there was some chance of getting away with it. Death had changed from a certainty to a mere possibility.

And that was something Conrad knew how to face.

THE SHIP had taken up orbit around Ganymede. In a few minutes a small "taxi" would arrive and take them to the space station, where the suspicious officials of the planet would investigate them before letting them land. They were getting into their space suits and giving their gear a final check.

"All right," the Captain said. "The taxi is a hundred yards off our port; everybody into the airlock."

Conrad turned his back on the others and stuck a heavily gauntleted hand under the edge of his couch. When he pulled it away, the switch-blade knife was hidden snugly in his palm.

"Mr. Conrad."

"Coming."

He drifted through the airlock and the door clanged shut behind him. The Captain pushed a button and the outer door slowly opened.

"Tie onto a line," the Captain said. "Then push off and drift to the taxi. When you're close enough, throw me your other line and I'll pull you in."

He hooked onto one of the lines attached to the airlock's wall. Watt looked at him questioningly, and then he and Jenkins and Captain Barclay and all the rest of them shoved off from the ship toward the little spot of reflected sunlight that was the taxi.

They tumbled over and over through space. Only the Captain was expert enough to steer by the little rocket on his back.

"I'm dizzy," Conrad heard Jenkins say over the radio.

"Don't break radio silence," Captain Barclay said.

The stars wheeled around him but he'd been in space before and the adrenalin rushing through his veins helped to keep him oriented. This was the moment of danger.

They came to the end of their safety lines. Some of them had overshot the mark, some had gone too far to one side or the other. The Captain caught the lines they threw him and pulled them in like so many kites.

"Barclay to the taxi," he said; "opening airlock."

"Roger. We're ready for you."

They clustered around the airlock, all of them watching as the Captain turned the wheel on the outside of the taxi. This was the moment for which Conrad had been waiting.

The moment when you could kill a man right out in the open without being seen. The only place where that was possible.

A crowd—a completely absorbed crowd.

He was right next to Jenkins; so was Watt. So were two others. In compact little group, everybody was next to everybody else.

The knife opened in his palm. It made no sound in the vacuum. No one saw his hand slip over. No one saw him slice a hole in Jenkins' suit.

Jenkins exploded.

The Captain turned around when he heard Watt gag. He saw a mass of rubber and plastic and flesh and he caught a glimpse of a knife. "Who did it?" he said. "Did you see who did it?"

There was no answer.

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## Coming Next Issue

### THE CONDUIT by Noel Loomis





# CASSANDRA

by Scott Nichols

Whoever originated the myth of the girl to whom the gods gave the power to prophecy with absolute accuracy—and then punished her by decreeing that the truth would not be believed—knew more about human nature than many realize. And perhaps they knew more about the nature of reality, too . . .

*Into the seething maelstrom  
Of catclysmic emptiness,  
To the chanting catalepsy  
Of slapping rifle butts,  
Let us hurl ourselves and drown.  
It is too late to think of living.  
The determinist can show  
A thousand entrained auguries  
Of sure and sudden death . . .*

*Anthem To Suicides — Arthur Russel Kury*

THE THIN, hawk-faced man wearing the silver eagles of a colonel yawned and said, "I think I'll turn in."

The slim-waisted first lieutenant sprang to his feet and said "Good night, Colonel Bellows." Kuprin only nodded. The colonel walked past the squat sergeant in wrinkled khakies and through the shellacked door that led from the veranda.

Kuprin, a small man with a startling bush of yellow-white hair, sagged wearily in the depths of his barrel chair and said, "Sergeant, I want this letter to go out on the midnight boat to the mainland."

The Lieutenant extended his hand for the envelope. "I'll take care of that, Doctor Kuprin."

Kuprin shook his head. "No, thanks, Tom." He looked piercingly at the sergeant. "Now, do you understand? Not the morning boat, this has to go out tonight."

The beefy sergeant raised bushy black eyebrows, but said nothing. He took the envelope and thrust it under his field jacket. Then he looked around the veranda—his eyes resting briefly on the Lieutenant—cataloging the door behind the officer through which Colonel Bellows had lately passed, noting the double screened doors that led from the mesh-enclosed veranda out onto a flagstone patio that gleamed whitely under a bloated tropic moon. In the brief moment of silence the distant churning of surf could be heard.

The sergeant walked past the Lieutenant and then turned. Swiftly he drew a revolver from the depths of his loose-fitting jacket. The blow made a dull sound, like a stick hitting a feather pillow, and the Lieutenant crumbled silently into a shapeless heap of khaki.

"Don't make a sound," the man whispered as Kuprin started from the

chair. "I wouldn't want to hurt you." He reached behind him with his free hand and turned the key in the shellacked door. Then he moved quickly to the screened doors and latched them.

"Now," he exhaled noisily, "we can talk."

Kuprin sank wearily back into the chair. "I wondered why they detailed a new man to the house tonight," he said. "How did you get ashore? Swim?"

"That's right," the man said. "Using an aqualung. You don't seem surprised."

"I was expecting you. Or rather someone like you."

"Then you know why I'm here."

"I think so..."

"And ...?"

"The answer, whatever-your-name is, is no."

"It was suggested," the man said, "that you might be reasonable. And the name, shall we say, is John."

"Or Ivan perhaps?"

"As you wish. It makes no difference."

"So I'm supposed to be reasonable?" Kuprin tossed his head angrily as a lock of white hair fell down over his eyes. "After what your kind did to me?"

"If necessary, I have instructions." The man named John punctuated the sentence with a gesture of the revolver.

"**YOU WON'T** kill me," Kuprin said slowly. He glanced at the watch with the frayed leather band on his wrist. "Not unless you remain undetected until three A.M. which I doubt." The Lieutenant groaned painfully and John whirled in his direction. He started to move to the fallen officer, but Kuprin said, "Let the boy alone. He won't bother you now."

"What do you know about three A.M.?"

"Why, nothing," Kuprin said. "Should I?"

"With that devilish machine of yours, who knows?"

"You mean KASS?"

"Ridiculous name," John snorted. "Never mind. You're going home, I can arrange for you to be taken from the island."

"Past the patrols out there?" Kuprin gestured in the direction of the distant surf. "You'd need a fleet of battleships."

"Not at all. My friend and I brought an inflatable raft. There's a submarine waiting off-shore." He stood in front of the chair, his hands on his hips, the pistol pointing at the floor. "Damn it, man," he said, "you're a virtual prisoner here. If you come back, you'll be wealthy—one of the great men of the nation."

"Remember why I left?"

"That's been forgotten."

"I haven't forgotten," Kuprin said bitterly. "Have you ever had your own son denounce you?"

"You know the Americans think of your KASS only as a weapon."

"I suppose you have other ideas," Kuprin said, the irony thick in his voice.

John straightened and thrust the revolver in his field jacket. He found an uneasy seat on the edge of the table beside the barrel chair. "Yes," he said vehemently, "as the final proof of all we've said. Of course, we're realistic enough to see the possibilities as a weapon in the wrong hands. You know as well as I do this thing the Yankees call a 'cold war' is a conflict not of men, but of philosophies. The whole basis of economic determinism is the inevitable decay of capitalistic economy without the artificial prop of war."

"Very pretty," Kuprin said through tight lips. "I haven't heard those gaudy phrases so nicely parroted since I sneaked across the border."

John's face clouded with anger. "Don't be a fool," he spat. "You're the very one who's proved our case,

KASS is the final proof of a point-for-point determinism."

"What if the pattern KASS sees isn't the one you see?" Kuprin demanded. "What then? Will you pack up your silly little theories about the inexorable Marxist path of history and go home?" He snorted. "I think not."

"If you won't come back willingly..." John said, pulling the revolver from his jacket again.

**F**AR UP THE beach, someone shouted and then began to fire a rifle. Almost immediately a siren wailed. John whirled toward the noise and in that instant a vase made a flashing arc across Kuprin's vision. The vase caught John on the arm, he cursed and dropped the gun as the Lieutenant hurled from the corner where he had been lying.

Someone began to hammer on the inner side of the shellacked door.

The Lieutenant was still groggy, and John's uninjured fist clubbed him to the floor. He scooped up the revolver and whirled on Kuprin.

"Through the screen door," he whispered. He aimed a kick against the doors and the latch snapped as a center brace crumbled. The doors flew back and he half-pushed, half-dragged Kuprin onto the patio. Through the sparse brush that ringed the area, naked bulbs glared near the front of the house and at one end of the island a bright searchlight fingered the night sky.

Suddenly the beam faded and in the same moment the lights about the house blacked out. Darkness rushed in upon them, pushed by the sound of a muffled explosion.

"The powerhouse," John whispered. The revolver prodded him off the patio and into the bushes.

"You'll never get off the island," Kuprin gasped.

"I'm prepared for that, now shut up, and get moving."

As they pushed through the brush and onto the curving stretch of moon-splotted beach, more shots sounded from the tip of the island where the powerhouse was located.

"They'll get him, you know," Kuprin said.

"He didn't expect to get away. Now move up the beach...toward that stand of trees."

They moved slowly along the border of the brush and paused at the foot of a double-bowled tree reaching far above them. John backed away, fumbled in the fork for a moment, pushing away dried grass. Then he withdrew a heavy-looking case by a leather carrying strap.

"All right, let's go," he said, gesturing up the beach. As they began to move, there was one final burst of firing to their rear.

"We're heading for the KASS installation," Kuprin said at length between labored breaths. Sand crunched behind him, but John said nothing. "What are you going to do?" he panted.

"What do you think?"

They rounded the finger of vegetation that thrust almost to the tip of the island and stopped. "Which one is it?" John demanded with a prod of the revolver.

"The big one like a barn. We located it up here to be away from the pile radiation. The other building on stilts is the radio shack."

"Any troops billeted around here?"

"No; they're all near the center of the island."

"All right, move in."

As they moved across the bare ground, Kuprin began to look to the right and left. He stumbled once and the man behind him cursed softly. As they drew abreast of the radio shack, a dark figure appeared on the elevated porch of the stilted building.

"Tell him it's all right," John whispered. Kuprin started to call out when the yellow beam of a flash

speared out, capturing them in its cone of light. Kuprin leaped to one side as the revolver exploded next to his ear.

The flash spiraled toward the ground, struck, and went out. After a moment there was the dull thud of a falling body.

"Damn," John cursed. "Now we'll have them down on our necks."

**THEY HURRIED** past the body of the radio operator and paused before the huge barn-like structure of prefabricated aluminum. The small door on the side was locked, but a shot from John's pistol shattered the hasp.

"Inside," he commanded. Kuprin heard him put the heavy case down and, as he started to move away in the interior blackness, the beam of a flash caught him and John said, "That's far enough."

The light flicked briefly about, throwing leaping shadows against the far wall. At one end of the huge interior a framework of shiny metal glistened. There were various black objects positioned on the framework and the light caught glints from silver busbars and several large, water-jacketed tubes. Through the framework a thousand wires and cables snaked to a bewildering bank of panels and keyboards, some of which still showed yawning holes where meters and indicators would eventually go.

"I thought the thing was nearly finished," John's voice cut the darkness.

"We've been calibrating it on short term analyses," Kuprin said.

John motioned him forward with the flash.

"Do you have to do this?" Kuprin protested.

"You can build another what-is-it."

"KASS," Kuprin said. "Short for Kuprin Assymtotic Statistical Surveyor."

"KASS is better."

"And short for Cassandra," Kuprin said.

John had positioned the flash on one of the keybanks so that the beam centered on Kuprin, but still allowed him enough visibility in which to work. He began to push a small metal box back among the apparatus on the framework. "Cassandra? Oh, yes, she was the one the gods gave the gift of prophesy."

"And then they cursed her so that no one would believe her."

"Oh, never fear," John said from the shadows. "We'll believe you."

"Will you? Listen I know what will happen at three A.M."

"Not unless I don't get back," John rasped. "Remember that."

"You've got to stop it."

"I couldn't if I wanted to. Do you think we can take the chance of such a weapon remaining in their hands?"

"You're a fool," Kuprin said wearily. "KASS can't possibly be used as a weapon."

"Shut up and let's get out of here," John said, grabbing the flash. "They'll start shelling the north end in another ten minutes. That'll give us a chance to get the life raft inflated and off the beach."

Just as they opened the door, the lights came on outside and the siren resumed its interrupted wailing. John grabbed Kuprin's shoulder and pushed him through the door.

"I'd hate to kill you now, so move."

As they approached the radio shack, a group of three soldiers burst through the underbrush; John swore and raised his revolver.

**KUPRIN** kicked back with all of his strength and, as John cried out in pain, he dropped to the sand.

He heard the sound of pounding feet and saw John running in a low crouch for the area of darkness beyond the lights. The three soldiers dropped to the protection of the

brush as he fired and began to shoot at the running man. In the uncertain light he made a poor target.

Kuprin didn't wait to see if they would get John; he rolled over and over until he was at the base of the steps that led upward to the radio shack. Then he mounted to the porch and ran inside.

The transmitter was humming as though it had been abandoned in mid-transmission when the power failed. Over the crackling of static, he heard a distant operator repeating their call sign. He found the send-receive switch and began to talk earnestly. He didn't know the code in use. So he sent the message in the clear and had the man repeat it back. Then he went outside and waited until Colonel Bellows followed by the battered-looking Lieutenant pushed into the clearing.

"Colonel," he yelled, "they've got a submarine in the lagoon."

The Colonel whirled on the Lieutenant. "Get on that radio," he ordered, "and get every craft you can out there. I want every damn inch of that lagoon depth-charged."

A rash of shots broke out from further down the beach.

"Come on," the Colonel said. "We'd better get you back to the safety of the house until we get that man."

"Just one more thing," Kuprin told him about the bomb.

**F**ROM THE direction of the lagoon came the monotonous crunch of exploding depth charges. The patio was brightly lighted and on the veranda the Lieutenant sat in the barrel chair while a Medical Corps captain applied adhesive tape to the wound behind his ear. Kuprin watched from a straight backed chair by the door.

"Better get you to the mainland in the morning for x-rays," the Captain said as he gathered up his gear.

Colonel Bellows stepped onto the

veranda. "We'd better get inside. That fellow's still on the loose. He'll try to get you before we get him."

"No," Kuprin said.

"That's an order, Doctor."

"Damn it," Kuprin flared, "I'm tired of your highhanded methods. What right did you people have in the first place to invade my privacy and to keep me penned up like an animal on this island?"

"These are difficult times."

"Doesn't anyone think in anything but the same tired cliches?" Kuprin demanded.

"Dr. Kuprin," the Colonel said placatingly, "you've got to understand that you and your KASS device are important parts of the defense effort."

"And you're all a pack of idiots... just like that man John with all of his puppet phrases." He sat silently for a moment, staring at the floor. Finally, he said, "I'm sorry, Colonel, it's not *your* fault. I tried a dozen times to convince your superiors that KASS can't be used as a weapon."

The Lieutenant had been listening silently until then. "But KASS can be used to predict the future, can't it?" he blurted and then looked apologetically at the Colonel.

"On the most rigidly deterministic basis," Kuprin agreed, "but any prognosis includes its own existence."

"Sort of like a regenerative circuit in time?" the Lieutenant suggested.

"Not quite," Kuprin said. "The feedback modifies the original factors rather than just reinforcing them."

"Rubbish," the Colonel exploded. Then he colored and said, "I'm sorry, Doctor, didn't mean to be rude, but you'll never convince me that the human factor in war isn't the important one."

"And the human factor is a part of KASS's prognosis."

From inside the house a voice called, "Colonel Bellows." The Colonel started for the door.

"Keep an eye open," he told the Lieutenant.

"But KASS is only a statistical device," the Lieutenant said as soon as the Colonel left.

"Correct," Kuprin agreed, "but it is not a *probability* device, that's the important distinction."

"I don't see what you mean."

"Did you ever study physics?"

"Yes...in college."

"Then you're familiar with Newton's Laws of Motion?"

"Yes, but, according to modern theory, they're only generalizations, they break down on the atomic and molecular level."

"Bosh! The basic principles are still valid, it's just our ability to observe that breaks down. The behavior of the individual molecule or atom is just as predictable as the path of a billiard ball, if all the factors are known."

"It seems to me," the Lieutenant objected, "that I heard something

about randomness on an atomic level. And what about the Heisenberg Principle?"

KUPRIN tapped his forehead. "The limitations are up here. The Heisenberg Principle was always with it even if we didn't recognise it. If I use a yardstick to measure that table, both are changed to some slight degree by the process, but the magnitude of interaction isn't great enough for us to detect it. The Heisenberg Principle doesn't say anything except that...that you can't measure a block of ice with a yardstick made of sodium metal. Remember? We tried to measure the velocity and position of an electron with a light beam; the electron absorbed energy from the beam, altering the very quantities we were trying to measure."

"I see," the Lieutenant said excitedly. "Then, the distinction is between abstract predictability and our practical ability to predict?"

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"Exactly," Kuprin said. "Look, suppose we had a little man—call him Joe—on a molecule, and he had a supercalculator and all sorts of observational equipment, and he could arrive at solutions of a problem instantaneously. Now, we have a choice. Either the number of forces acting on Joe's molecule at a given instant are infinite or they are finite."

"Well, this infinity business," the Lieutenant laughed. "That one makes my head swim."

"Mine, too," Kuprin confessed. "Actually, infinity is just a convenient concept in our math. We actually have no observational data on its actual existence. In fact, every observational concept is against its existence. So, if the forces on the molecule are finite in number, then little Joe with his calculator can eventually predict the path, velocity and so forth of his molecule."

"And the same with every other molecule," the Lieutenant said.

"Exactly. And the behavior of every molecule in the universe is implicit in any one molecule which reacts with the universe. Of course, in practice we establish certain boundaries to our reactive universe: the upper atmosphere and a sphere some ten miles below the surface of the earth."

"But doesn't that bring in errors?"

"Some. The background noise, for want of a better term, is cumulative, of course, and grows with the range of the prediction. Generally, though, our sample universe's boundaries are fairly impenetrable." Kuprin laughed. "Of course, if a meteor fell on the White House or the Kremlin... well, that's something we can't foresee."

"Or an 'H' bomb?" Colonel Belows said, appearing in the doorway with a sheet of paper in his hand.

"No, not an 'H' bomb," Kuprin said. "That's predictable."

The Lieutenant sat, staring ahead for a moment. "Just like a game of

super-billiards," he said wonderingly.

"Just like billiards."

"Doctor," the Colonel interrupted, "I've just been given a transcript of a transmission from our station an hour ago."

"Oh," Kuprin said, his voice filled with disappointment. "Then you've canceled the forwarding instructions?"

"Of course."

Kuprin sighed. "I was a fool for trying, I suppose."

"Now, I've been very patient," the Colonel said. "I've done everything I could to make you comfortable, but if I have to mount an armed guard over you..."

"That won't be necessary," Kuprin said. "There won't be another attempt."

"I'll see to that," the Colonel said angrily. "Why, this place would be swarming with men from every intelligence branch if that message got out. I'd probably be relieved, and I don't know what else."

AT THAT moment men began to shout from the front of the house and the Lieutenant leaped to his feet. A thick shadow lurched into the lighted area of the patio. In an instant the Colonel threw himself to the side, upsetting Kuprin's chair and sprawling him on the floor. Almost simultaneously, flame darted from the shadowed figure and wood splinters flew from the door frame.

Then there was the ear-cutting crack of a Garand and the figure on the patio was thrown back violently. The Lieutenant was through the screened doors before the man on the patio stopped thrashing.

He toed the body with his foot and then yelled, "It's him... He's dead." He bent over the body and began to go through the pockets in the man's clothing. He started back to the veranda as a group of men appeared and began to mill around the body.



Kuprin righted his chair and sank weakly into it. "Thanks."

"That's what I'm paid for," the Colonel said.

"He would have missed, anyway."

The Colonel snorted.

"I found this on him," the Lieutenant said, holding out a white envelope.

"I think that's mine," Kuprin said and started to rise.

Colonel Bellows ran his thumb under the flap and extracted a folded piece of typing paper. He read slowly and his face became hard. He turned to Kuprin.

"You knew this man was coming," he accused.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you warn us?"

"It would have made no difference."

"I saw him give the man that letter," the Lieutenant volunteered.

"You even knew who he was," the Colonel said.

"Yes."

"I see no reason," the Colonel said, "why I shouldn't place you under immediate arrest. This is obviously a letter addressed to that man's superiors."

"You're right, but you won't arrest me."

"We'll see about that," the Colonel snapped.

"We have only a few more seconds," Kuprin said tiredly.

"Damn all this. Now a letter, asking those pirates to make no move against the island; and before that, the radio..."

"I thought perhaps..." Kuprin said tiredly. "There was always the chance the background might introduce a distortion."

"What kind of nonsense is this? What was the idea of that message to the Joint Chiefs, warning them to take no retaliatory action if anything happened out here tonight?" He walked over to Kuprin and grabbed him by

[Turn To Page 130]

Who ever heard of a corn blight that affected people?

*Who ever heard of things freezing on a planet where the temperature never dropped below 60?*

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*on sale July 1st*



## WHOLEHEARTED AGREEMENT

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

I want to be the very first one to tell you how much actual worth I received from the last letter of Bill Meyers, and your reply to him, in the May 1957 *Science Fiction Quarterly*. I honestly believe that he covered the whole detail, seriously. His are real letters, and ones that I wouldn't mind reading over and over, from time to time. I think that if we get more of these kind of letters, as time goes by, *Science Fiction Quarterly* won't have only what it takes, but the best letter dept. of any mag in the business.

I'd like to read more of the fellow's letters in following issues, for he seems to be no sleepy dog. I agreed with him on everything he said, especially about the pulp size format. Frankly though, I believe it is the lead feature novels, such as "No Time For Change" (De Vet), "Think No Evil" (Warner Jr.), "The Time Lockers" (West), and a few more, and the editorial, that cracks the whip with me. About the nearest nothing to a story I've ever read in this mag, though, was "No Future In This" (Randall). I surely don't think

that "Calculated Decision" (Budrys), was the best of the year, in this mag. Only a matter of opinion, anyhow, Mr. Butterworth. I don't believe in ESP either, Donald, but I do believe in the possibility on instantly traveling through any amount of space. I could go on and on, and talk about "Think No Evil." Are we going to get more like it?

Don Dixon is my friend, Donald. So better just be careful.

James W. Ayers,  
Attalla, Alabama

*If by our getting more stories like "Think No Evil" you mean more stories which will hit you as hard as that tale, then I can only say that I hope we will get more stories like it. I don't, however, think you'd care to see stories which merely rehash the Warner novelet; new angles on the material in it might be welcome, though.*

## 12-ISSUE REPORT

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

So many titles have come and gone since the first dozen issues of SFQ,

your magazine seems much older than it would perhaps had the field been more "normal". It's solid enough, anyway—I wouldn't keep these ratings up if you didn't hold my interest issue after issue, where other magazines didn't.

I hope this explanation of my symbols hasn't gotten as dull as the explanation of the rules of the game every week on a TV quiz show, but I have to assume that some will be reading these who did not see earlier ones. Numbers 1, 2, and 3 are all positive; a story I list as "1" is a tale I'd want to include in a "best of the year" anthology, and one I re-read; a "2" is very good indeed; a "3" is is good, all right—the kind of story that keeps me coming back for more, even if I don't think it a world-beater—it satisfies me at the time. Number 4 and 5 are on the debit side; a "4" is a story which didn't satisfy me, and a "5" is one that struck me as being a waste of my time.

As soon as I get a new issue, I type out a list of the stories and put the sheet aside. After reading the issue, and letting it "set" in my mind for awhile, I take out the contents list, and rate the stories, *without referring to the magazine*. If I've read a particular story again before rating time, that virtually insures a positive rating. Then, when I type up my dozen-issue list, I usually find myself trying to recall, in my comment, some reason why a given story I listed as "2" or "3" didn't impress me more highly.

(As regular readers know, we set up Mr. Freeman's reports in a special way. The first set of parenthesis gives his rating; the second set gives mine, in retrospect—also without looking any story up; the open set is for you to insert your own, if you'd like. So get out your pencils, and see how your opinions in retrospect compare with Mr. Freeman's and mine. RAWL)

(1) (1) ( ) The Day Doom Came (Gosche) The "best-of-the-year" anthologists were asleep in 1954 when they didn't pick this story.

(1) (1) ( ) Change of Color (Jour-

dan): An excellent proof that sex doesn't have to be ignored or made into "sexiness" in science fiction.

(1) (2) ( ) The Red and the Green (Hensley): A very fine bit a empathy, I think.

(1) (1) ( ) Better Than We Know (Temple): When this didn't show up in the "best of 1955" anthologies, I decided not to waste any more money on the anthologies. Do they read all the stories published? Or even all the short ones? I'm doubtful.

(1) (1) ( ) Fort Iron (St. Clair): Another splendid mood piece, very well handled.

(1) (2) ( ) Salvage (Priestly): a real shocker, tastefully done; a tyro would have expanded it to at least 10,000 words.

(1) (2) ( ) Love Me Again (Emshwiller): Some authors start on the competent level and rise slowly; this one started high and has pretty well held up, where she hasn't improved.

(1) (1) ( ) The Piece Thing (Emshwiller): Here was a case where the author improved over a high-level backlog.

(1) (2) ( ) The Last Question (Asimov): A triumph of workmanship and internal logic over lack of complete originality. (Lack of complete—not complete lack of.)

(1) (1) ( ) The Little Giant (Barrow): Another newcomer starting with a splendid bit of writing, injecting new life into an old theme.

(1) (1) ( ) Children of Fortune (Jourdan): The writer's one whose discovery you ought to be very proud of, as well as the fact that you seem to have an exclusive on him. Whatever the reason, I hope you're thankful for the fact. (I am. RAWL)

(2) (2) ( ) The Guthrie Method (Gallun): While not at the very top, for me, a lot better than many of the "best," if one believes the anthologists.

(2) (2) ( ) The Adaptable Ones (Klass): Can't tell why this just misses a "1" rating with me, but it's a very fine job nonetheless.

(2) (3) ( ) Earthfall (Nelson): One of the oldest stories in the world, with a fresh feeling about it.

(2) (2) ( ) The Watchers (Banks): Here, I think more extended treatment would have brought it up to the top.

(2) (2) ( ) Moon Dance (West): This author seems to write basically very average stories, but with a zest that puts them right up to the top of the second division. One can feel that Mr. West enjoys science fiction and thinks it's worth putting himself into; and the results are always a real good story, even if not a great one. (We need more authors like him, and less would-be great minds floundering out of their depth!)

(2) (3) ( ) Voting Machine (Harmon): The thought in this one raises it above the level of the writing, for me.

(2) (2) ( ) The Adventurers (Kornbluth): The writing brings it up over the slight level of the story.

(2) (3) ( ) You Risk Your Life (Slotkin): Pungent, apt criticism of realities around us in the "If This Goes On manner".

(2) (2) ( ) The Regenerators (Stearns): A very good science-fictional slant upon a *Weird Tales* type of story.

(2) (1) ( ) No Future In This (Randall): What is here is very fine; it should have been explored more deeply, at greater length.

(2) (2) ( ) One of Them? (Abernathy): Treatment again conquers familiarity of theme.

(2) (2) ( ) The Time-Lockers (West): see comment on "Moon Dance".

(2) (2) ( ) Back To Nature (Walton): see comment on "No Future in This".

(2) (1) ( ) Deus Ex Machina (Randall): see comment on "No Future in This".

(2) (2) ( ) Calculated Decision (Burdrys): The author's desire to project an air of technological verisimilitude got in his way. He suffers from need for discipline in this respect, since he often has a very moving story to tell.

(2) (1) ( ) A Prideful Thing (Pease): Very amusing, but a somewhat labored.

(2) (2) ( ) Small Lords (Pohl): Sheerly as a story, this would rate a "1" with me, but I can't believe these small people possible on the planet as described.

(3) (2) ( ) Small War (Bixby): Yes, I liked it—but that's all. Not enough to it.

(3) (3) ( ) Mass For Mixed Voices (Beaumont): likewise.

(3) (3) ( ) Polar Punch (Ellanby): Good fun.

(3) (3) ( ) T.D.P. (Spencer): Readable enough.

(3) (3) ( ) The Seeker of Titan (van Riper): Interesting.

(3) (3) ( ) Rebellion Indicated (Henderson): Likewise.

(3) (3) ( ) Desperate Remedy (Reynolds): Entertaining.

(3) (3) ( ) No Time For Change (De Vet): Good adventure, but I'm baffled that so many readers seemed to think it was something of a classic.

(3) (2) ( ) The Fission of Mrs. Custer (Marks): Amusing, but I think you've had better humor tales.

(3) (3) ( ) Possession (de Camp): Ordinary for this author, even though enjoyable.

(3) (3) ( ) Giant in the Forest (Long): It would have stood out more sharply in a magazine with generally lower standards.

(3) (3) ( ) The Eye in the Window (Merwin Jr.): Much better than many of his, but I find the plot-elements mechanical and the writing sleek—and superficial.

(3) (3) ( ) The Sedulous Apes (Wiegand): see comment on the "Fission of Mrs. Custer".

(3) (3) ( ) Gladstone Planet (Winterbotham): Likewise.

(3) (3) ( ) The Guzzler (Abernathy): Good adventure.

(3) (3) ( ) Perfect Discipline (Winterbotham): Slight, but good.

(3) (3) ( ) Reunion (Sprague III): Seems to have the Merwin touch, but it was all right.

(3) (3) ( ) Meddler's World (Coggsell & Reynolds): More quite acceptable adventure—but I'm saddened to think what might have been done with the theme.

(3) (3) ( ) Think No Evil (Warner Jr.): All right.

(3) (3) ( ) Why Should I Stop? (Budrys): A very good point, but I'm not convinced that this was the best way to present it.

(3) (2) ( ) Honor (Wilson): While avoiding the overly-bitter and the overly-saccharine, the author's style manner of presentation didn't seem right for this story.

(3) (3) ( ) Elected (G. H. Smith): Slight, but good.

(3) (3) ( ) The Man Who Left Paradise (Winterbotham): see comment on "Fission of Mrs. Custer". One of the "better humorous tales" referred to would be "The Eyes Have It" by Philip K. Dick, in *Science Fiction Stories* Number 1.

(3) (3) ( ) Wyvernhold (de Camp): See comment on "Possession".

(3) (3) ( ) The Golden Ones (Stearns): good adventure.

(3) (2) ( ) Case Rests (Reynolds): Well done, but it's been done too often.

(3) (3) ( ) Inauguration (St. Clair): Likewise.

(3) (2) ( ) Misadjustment (Dick): Phi on psi!

(3) (2) ( ) Bema (West): Has the author's characteristic qualities, but is much slighter than usual.

(4) (3) ( ) Five Scotch Story (Cox Jr.): Over-earnest.

(4) (3) ( ) Trio (Marks): Unconvincing.

(4) (3) ( ) The Taint (Jakes): Likewise.

(4) (3) ( ) The Big Hush (Cox Jr.): Both over-earnest and unconvincing.

(4) (3) ( ) The Munk Hour (B. Wells): I can't recall it well enough to suggest why I did care for it.

(4) (3) ( ) Dog Star (Reynolds): Cute—and stale.

(4) (3) ( ) Time to Stop (Garrett): A fugitive from "Probability Zero," no doubt.

(5) (3) ( ) Beyond the Door (Merwin Jr.): A fascinating buildup leads nowhere.

plain (Boren): Sorry, it didn't seem funny to me.

(5) (3) ( ) It's In The Air (Marks): see comment on "Beyond the Door".

There were 67 stories in these twelve issues, as against 78 last time. 11 outstanding selections, opposed to 12 last time seems like a loss until we remember that 11/67ths is a little better than 1/6th, and that 12/78ths breaks down to 2/13ths—so you've held your ground. The other extreme of the scale shows a similar hold—10 stories I thought unsatisfactory to bad this time, as against 14 last time—10/67ths as opposed to 14/79ths or 7/39ths. Not much difference, except that there's one more topflight story than fumble this time—but last time, you dropped the ball, twice more often than you scored, by story count.

There was one less "2" listing—17 of them this time, as against 18 last time. The "3"s remain the backbone of the magazine, as they always are. I think if a reader finds a good center of "3" stories in a magazine, he's going to stick with it. That the majority of the stories fall into my personal "3" rating—meaning "good"—indicates that you have a wide appeal. Obviously, others will put some of these "3" stories higher or lower than I did; but the point is, a magazine with a solid center in the "good story" category can be considered reliable. The odds are that the reader won't be disappointed with a given issue, and there's a good chance of coming across a better story and/or a real humdinger in every issue. A magazine which mostly offers stories that a reader thinks are either terrific or atrocious is very unreliable. One or two assortments where they all seem to be bad can sour a reader completely. In short, despite your continuous presentation of offtrail and unusual material, you maintain a level—which you rise above more often than you fall below. And here the bald number of stories conceals an interesting qualification: of the 10 I listed as debits to the magazine, only one was longer than short story

(5) (3) ( ) Noogles Have to Ex-

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length, and two were short-shorts of the "filler" type.

Covers: The three I liked best were for February 1957 (Emsh), August 1955 (Emsh) and August 1954 (Freas); the least good, I thought, were February 1955 (Freas), May 1955 (Emsh), and November 1955 (Freas). Hope we're all still here in 1959.

## WILLIS FREEMAN

*I hope so, too. Hmm, now how are you going to decide when it's time to break down Future Science Fiction for us?*

*In case you're wondering why the editor didn't make any "4" or "5" marks, I haven't re-read any of the stories since they appeared. At the time they were selected, I honestly thought that they were at least "good", corresponding to Mr. Freeman's "3" rating. Now it stands to reason that my record cannot be as impeccable as all that; if I re-read them, I might feel that some were, indeed, errors on my part—and some*

*may not be as good as I thought, or might even think now, since no one has perfect taste.*

## SUMMATION

Dear Doc:

I had intended to write this weeks ago when the February issue of SFQ made its newsstand appearance. Before it gets too stale, I'll run off these few lines in answer to your editorial, although I probably would devote lots more space and time if not tied up so badly right now on a project.

Personally, I think you're presenting a far more pessimistic outlook of the overall SFantasy scene, despite how true your words are as far as the general acceptance of the genre goes. Things aren't really that bad. That they *smell*, that they could be vastly improved, on that there's no argument.

Without resorting to lengthy dissertations, a thorough ukase or history of the science/fantasy fiction field, the whole core of the problem,

[Turn To Page 114]







## QUICKLY SELLS TWO SHORT STORIES

"I sold two short stories which paid for my M.I.A. course and a typewriter. But nothing can pay for the help M.I.A. training has given me in overcoming the inertia which sits down with me at my typewriter and keeps me from getting started. These regular assignments, coming with the inevitability of home runs at a Yankee game, have produced results."—Samuel K. Ward, 354 W. 28th St., New York 1, N. Y.

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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

the gist of it all can be adequately summed up plainly by saying:

SFantasy magazines, books and correlated items in the genre have met with poor results by and large (especially during the critical recession years of 1954-55, including the early part of '56) primarily because the bulk of them were trash, to mediocre at best. The exception didn't obviously make the rule.

While there is what seems to be at times an overwhelming large segment of the population whose mentality (if compared to a pendulum) would be found swinging back and forth around the Elvis Presley level, there is—thank the gods—an evergrowing group of people whose tastes are becoming ever more demanding and keener, and whose senses are more receptive to a form of entertainment that does manage to transcend the mundane and utterly banal.

So—if SFantasy met with some degree of acceptance and found more than adequate acceptance during the 2 "boom" periods of 1939-42 and the last one, circa 1949-53 (actually they manage to slowly build up instead of "boom" I think), the only explanation, the only rational answer I can find is that the Fantasy "field" failed its followers; sycophants, satellites, yes-men and such included.

I feel the above can be somewhat corroborated, even though on a far larger scale, by comparing the recent collapse of the gigantic and incompetent Crowell-Collier Corporation. There is little if any disparity between the type of thinking, fumbling—obstinacy if we wish to call it that—and overall selfish tendencies often exhibited by those who have a chance to do "great things" with SFantasy (but mostly end up by doing the reverse) and the eggheadedness of Collier's or the ignorance of the American farmer per se, whose lands are changing into another Sahara (compared to the centuries old lands of Europe that are as fertile as ever).

I rest my case.

CALVIN THOMAS BECK,  
Box 497, Hackensack, New Jersey

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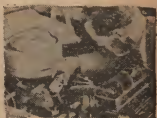
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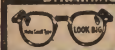


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This is the greatest offer of your lifetime! For not one red cent down, you can own a ranch estate in Fabulous Arizona! Your homestead is located half-way between Arizona's two largest cities, Tucson and Phoenix, away from it all, yet just a few minutes from the thriving city of Casa Grande! Most folks wait a lifetime for a chance to own a place like this—where you can go hunting, fishing, camping in the pines... visit romantic Old Mexico nearby... or if you prefer, just rest in a climate so invigorating, whiter and sweeter, that millionaires come from all over the world to enjoy it! Large, level, high fertile land! All utilities available! Trailer section! Rush the coupon TODAY—be the envy of all your friends—own a ranch estate in Arizona... for vacation, a home or retirement!



\$5 MONTH

## CLIP & MAIL

### DEER RUN RANCH ESTATES

Box 26, P. O. Box 51, Casa Grande, Arizona

PLEASE SEND FREE COLORFUL BROCHURE AND FULL INFORMATION ON NO DOWN PAYMENT OFFER!

☐ Name

Address

City

Zone

State

### SPECIAL PREFERRED PURCHASER'S PLAN

☐ I want to reserve my homestead on your SPECIAL 30-DAY, NO RISK MONEY BACK GUARANTEE by sending the first monthly payment of \$3.00!

Advise me of the location of my lot and send brochure by return mail!



## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

Of course, what has often appeared to the outside to have been a chance to do "great things" with science fiction hasn't been anything of the kind; one learns this rather soon from the inside.

### LIMITED OFFER

Dear Editor:

Just a note to let you know that I enjoy your magazine very much. I often wonder how many of your readers get extra copies. They come in very handy when you wish to trade with other fans. I usually get 2 or 3 copies at the newstand, as I get many requests for back issues. I am manager of the N. F. F. F. TRADER, which is published every other month. N3F is a stf organization which started in 1941.

The NEWYORCON is past history, but you can still get a copy of the "Newyorcon Memory Book" at \$1.00 a copy. It has 160 pages of mimograph material, printed covers, special plastic binding, fanzine combone, and a NYCON I (first Con) report by James Taurasi of *Fantasy Times*. It will be a collectors item in a short time, as only 100 copies were published. Get yours before they are all gone.

K. MARTIN CARLSON,  
N. F. F. F. Director  
Moorhead, Minn.

## INSIDE Science Fiction

(continued from page 82)

As a tribute to the memory of one of the earliest creators of modern science-fiction, Ray Cummings, we thought it would be appropriate to republish the following letter, written by Forrest J. Ackerman, and which appeared in a recent issue of the science fiction newspaper, *Fantasy Times*:

"Tonight I will go to the 1113th meeting of the Los Angeles Fantasy Society and tell them we have lost a

Reducing Specialist Says:  
**LOSE WEIGHT**

Where  
It  
Shows  
Most

# REDUCE

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PART OF  
THE  
BODY WITH

## ELECTRIC Spot Reducer

Relaxing • Soothing  
Penetrating Massage



UNDERWRITERS  
LABORATORY  
APPROVED



FOR GREATEST BENEFIT IN REDUCING by massage use spot REDUCER with or without electricity—also used as an aid in the relief of pains for which massage is indicated.

## TAKE OFF EXCESS WEIGHT!

Don't Stay **FAT**—You Can **LOSE**  
**POUNDS** and **INCHES** SAFELY Without Risking  
HEALTH

**L**IKE a magic wand, the "Spot Reducer" obeys your every wish. Most any part of your body where it is loose and flabby, wherever you have extra weight and inches, the "Spot Reducer" can aid you in acquiring a youthful, slender and graceful figure. The beauty of this scientifically designed Reducer is that the method is so simple and easy, the results quick, sure and harmless. No exercises or strict diets. No steambaths, drugs or laxatives.

With the SPOT REDUCER you can now enjoy the benefits of RELAXING, SOOTHING massage in the privacy of your own home! Simple to use—just plug in, grasp handle and apply over most any part of the body—stomach, hips, chest, neck, thighs, arms, buttocks, etc. The relaxing, soothing massage breaks down **FATTY TISSUES**, tones the muscles and flesh, and the increased circulation carries away waste fat—helps you regain and keep a firmer and more **GRACEFUL FIGURE!**

### YOUR OWN PRIVATE MASSEUR AT HOME

When you use the Spot Reducer, it's almost like having your own private masseur at home. It's fun reducing this way! It not only helps you reduce and keep slim—but also aids in the relief of those types of aches and pains—and tired nerves that can be helped by massage! The Spot Reducer is handily made of light weight aluminum and rubber and truly a beautiful invention you will be thankful you own. AC 110 volts. Underwriters Laboratory approved.

## TRY THE SPOT REDUCER 10 DAYS FREE IN YOUR OWN HOME!

Mail this coupon with only \$1 for your Spot Reducer on approval. Pay postage \$2.95 plus delivery—or send \$9.95 full price and we ship postage prepaid. Use it for ten days in your own home. Then if not delighted return Spot Reducer for full purchase price refund. Don't delay! You have nothing to lose—except ugly, embarrassing, undesirable pounds of **FAT**. MAIL COUPON NOW!

### SENT ON APPROVAL—MAIL COUPON NOW!

**BODY MASSAGER CO., Dept. B-591**  
403 Market St., Newark, N. J.

Please send me the Spot Reducer for 10 days trial period. I enclose \$1. Upon arrival I will pay postage only \$2.95 plus postage and handling. If not delighted I may return SPOT REDUCER within 10 days for prompt refund of full purchase price.

☐ I enclose \$12.98. Send DeLuxe Model.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

☐ SAVE POSTAGE—check here if you enclose \$9.95 with order. We pay all postage and handling charges. Some money back guarantee applies.

**LOSE WEIGHT  
OR NO CHARGE**

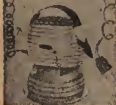
### USED BY EXPERTS

Thousands have lost weight this way—in hips, abdomen, legs, arms, neck, buttocks, etc. The same method used by stage, screen and radio personalities and leading reducing salons. The Spot Reducer can be used in your spare time, in the privacy of your own room.

**ORDER IT TODAY!**

**LOSE WEIGHT OR NO CHARGE**

PLUG IN  
GRASP  
HANDLE  
AND  
APPLY



Take pounds off—keep slim and trim with Spot Reducer! Remarkable new invention which uses one of the most effective reducing methods employed by masseurs and Turkish baths—MASSAGE!

### ALSO USE IT FOR ACES AND PAINS



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Relax with electric Spot Reducer. See how soothing its gentle massage can be. Helps you sleep when massage can be of benefit.



#### MUSCULAR ACES:

A handy helper for transient relief of discomforts that can be aided by gentle, relaxing massage.

MAIL THIS 10 DAY FREE TRIAL COUPON NOW!

## To The Man With HERNIA



### Who Can Not Submit To Surgery

The man condemned to live with rupture, all too often faces a grim future.

There is only one known cure...and that is surgical correction. Yet, for many, this relief must be denied or delayed for any one of a variety of reasons. It is to this group of unfortunate persons that this message is directed.

There are two choices—to wear a truss, or not to wear one. But, since hernia never heals itself, and generally continues to become more severe, the second choice is eventually eliminated. That leaves only one question in the mind of the hernia sufferer: "What kind of a truss should I wear?" Until recently there was little choice. Most trusses all looked alike. They consisted of a leather covered steel spring which snapped around the hips, firmly pressing an unyielding pad against the hernia opening. Many hernia victims chose to be semi-invalids and risk danger of strangulation, rather than wear a truss.

#### Now a New Way to Support Hernia

Less than two years ago a man who had suffered from hernia himself for many years devised a new kind of support. It was so totally different from other trusses that the United States government recognized its exclusive design by granting him a patent.

Now this new device is available to hernia sufferers everywhere. It is revolutionary. There are no steel springs. No leather. No hard, gouging knobs. No unsightly bulk. "RUPTURE-GARD," as this new hernia support has been named, is suspended from the waist. There are no cruel straps, bands or springs around the hips to chafe and rub. It is as comfortable to wear as a pair of trousers—and just as easy to slip on or off.

There are no complications—such as ordering a "double," "right" or "left." RUPTURE-GARD takes care of all reducible inguinal hernia, providing safe protection for the person with double hernia, and desirable "balanced" pressure for the person with hernia on just one side.

The broad, flat pad is molded from firm, yet comfortable foam rubber, covered on the top by strong nylon mesh for cool comfort and complete wearability.

You'll like RUPTURE-GARD. If you have hernia—or know someone suffering from this affliction—won't you do yourself a real favor right now, and mail the coupon below? There's absolutely no obligation—and you'll get the complete facts on RUPTURE-GARD by return mail, in a plain envelope!

### TEAR OUT AND MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

The Kintlen Co., Dept. DO-57W  
809 Wyandotte St., Kansas City 5, Mo.

Rush me in a plain envelope, full information about RUPTURE-GARD. I understand there is absolutely no obligation on my part.

Name.....  
Address.....Zone.....  
City.....State.....

## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

giant. I have already phoned Ray Bradbury, who reminisced with me and was sorrowed, and written Jack Williamson and Edmond Hamilton, two of his old admirers. Born 1887, died of cerebral hemorrhage 1957: Ray Cummings. The Man Who Mastered Time! He was already a legendary figure of the Scientific Romance era of sci-fi when I was a pre-teen picking up my first sf mag. How I thrilled to "Tarrano the Conqueror," "Beyond the Stars," "The Princess of the Atom." How exciting the serialization of his "Into the Fourth Dimension" in *Science and Invention*! Ah, the Tarzanic chase, the scent of the spoor, the tracking down in musty, dimly-lit second-hand magazine stores of the ancient copies of *Argosy* containing instalments of his "The Fire People," "People of the Golden Atom" itself! Make no mistake about it: for we old fossil survivors of the prehistoric sf age, Cummings spelled glamor with a capital glam. If he hadn't imbued Moskowitz and me with such a Sense of Wonder with his imagination, perhaps we wouldn't miss it so mournfully now.

"I will always be glad that I got him to make his last public sf appearance at the recent Newyorcon, where his reception by fans who had not forgotten his great contributions was most gratifying. His work will live on for many years yet. Ace will probably next publish his "Beyond the Stars," Hatchette of Paris will translate his "Man Who Mastered Time" into French. And I shall not rest satisfied until something of his has come to the screen as a scientific film. He has gone to his own "realm of unthought things"; to his wife, Gabrielle, and daughter, Betty Starr, I say: his memory will always be as golden in my heart as the word-worlds he created at atomic wonder."

**NEWS AND VIEWS:** Science fiction magazines again are appearing on the stands by the score. What with many of the publishers killing off their detective magazines and sub-

# HERE IS THE KIND OF HE-MAN BODY YOU CAN HAVE!

## WHAT'S THE SECRET?

You can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back; add inches to your chest, develop a vise-like grip, make those legs of yours powerful, shoot new strength into your back-bone, exercise those inner organs, cram your body full of vigor and red-blooded vitality! The new "home gym method" that's the sure beat and most inexpensive. It has changed many a 90 lb. weakling to a he-man. It has turned many a skinny boy into a marvelous physical specimen. It can do the same for you! No \$50.00 courses. No expensive gadgets.

You simply use the inexpensive home gym which helps you use the dormant muscle power in your own body. You will watch it increase in double quick time into solid muscle. The home gym method is easy! Only 10 minutes a day in your own home! You can use the home gym method in the morning or at night for no longer than it takes to shave or get dressed—when you use the home gym method you'll be using the method used by many of the greatest athletes, used by football players, wrestlers, fighters and men who keep in trim!

No matter how skinny or flabby you are the amazing new muscle power body builder can help you gain inches of solid muscle in double quick time — only 10 minutes a day!

THE HOME GYM IS SOMETHING EVERYONE WHO WANTS A BETTER BUILD WILL PRIZE! JUST MAILING THE COUPON MAY MEAN THE TURNING POINT IN YOUR LIFE!

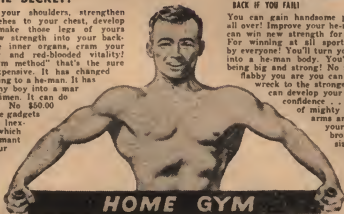
### NO EXPENSIVE GADGETS! NO \$30 TO \$100 COURSE!

You will get miraculous results . . . You will keep that sparkle of youth and you will experience a new zest for life. All it needs is 10 MINUTES A DAY, only 10 minutes. You will look better, you will feel better, you will think better, you will be better in every way, and you will have a body you don't have to be ashamed of. Because it is so simple the cost of your home gymnasium is trivial, when compared with what it can do for you. It will last you a lifetime. You can't break it with ordinary use. Remember this little home gym must do everything we claim — circulate your blood . . . tone up your muscles — relax those nerves that are so keyed up that you are ready to scream — It must make you feel more pep and vitality than you ever had in your life. It must work or it doesn't cost you a penny. Full price only \$2.98.

### SOLD ON A MONEY BACK GUARANTEE — ONLY \$2.98. MAIL COUPON NOW!

YOU MAIL THE COUPON BELOW AND YOU CAN PROVE TO YOURSELF YOU CAN BE A NEW MAN! THE SECRET METHOD CALLED THE "HOME GYM METHOD" HAS DONE WONDERS FOR THOUSANDS. HERE'S WHAT IT WILL DO FOR YOU IN JUST 10 MINUTES A DAY!

Just mail the coupon below, then in 10 minutes a day you will soon be convinced that you can have the kind of body your friends admire—there's no cost if you fail! No matter how old or young you are or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be—if you can flex your arm you can add solid muscle to your biceps in amazingly quick time!



YOU TOO CAN BE TOUGH! GAIN REAL MUSCLE POWER! BE AN ALL AROUND WINNER! DEVELOP NEW STRENGTH AND HE MAN LOOKS!

YOU CAN BROADEN YOUR SHOULDERS—STRENGTHEN THE MUSCLES THAT COUNT, IN ONLY 10 MINUTES A DAY—RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME—YOUR MONEY BACK IF YOU FAIL!

You can gain handsome power packed muscles all over! Improve your he-man looks 1000%. You can win new strength for money-making work! For winning at all sports! You'll be admired by everyone! You'll turn your old skeleton frame into a he-man body. You'll be on the road to being big and strong! No matter how skinny or flabby you are you can turn yourself from a wreck to the strongest of strong . . . You can develop your 620 muscles and gain confidence . . . you will see inches of mighty muscle added to your arms and chest . . . you'll see your back and shoulders broadened, you'll gain size, power, speed, from your head to your toes . . . You'll be admired by all . . . You'll be a winner where muscles count! Many gain up to 60 lbs. of muscle and add inches to chest and arms . . . Many

turn fat into muscles . . . You can develop your back, your grip, your legs—you'll look, feel, act, like a real he-man. You'll find it easier to win women and men friends . . . You'll win in sports, win promotion, you'll win more praise and popularity! You get everything you need in one compact package—you do-it-all in just 10 minutes a day, with the HOME GYM. You get complete and full instructions with the HOME GYM . . . you'll be amazed at how easy it is to get in shape and stay in shape with the HOME GYM.



### NO EXPENSIVE GADGETS! NO \$30 TO \$100 COURSE!

WIN A SILVER CUP —  
Awarded to Users Making  
Greatest Improvement in  
Next 3 Months.

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ONLY \$2.98. MAIL COUPON NOW!

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PLEASE RETURN THE HOME GYM WITH FULL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ONLY \$2.98 complete ON MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!

☐ I enclose \$2.98 cash, check or money order, send postage prepaid if save up to 50¢ postage by sending \$2.98 with my order!

☐ I ENCLOSE \$2.98, SEND AMAZING DELUXE MODEL!

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\$1.25

## TALKING SKULL



### It Whirls—It Frightens

A realistic talking skull that actually talks in spine-tingling chatter and dances eerily on the table. Great fun to place in front of a bunch of chattering women. It'll frighten the wits out of them. Works on simple wind up. Full money back guarantee. Don't delay! Order now. Only \$1.25. Send cash, check or money order, or order C.O.D.

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Lynbrook, New York

## RUPTURED

### BE FREE FROM TRUSS SLAVERY

Now there is a new modern Non-Surgical treatment designed to permanently correct rupture. These Non-Surgical treatments are so certain, that a Lifetime Certificate of Assurance is given.

Write today for our New FREE Book that gives facts that may save you painful and expensive surgery, and tells how non-surgically you may again work, live, play and love and enjoy life in the manner you desire. There is no obligation. Excelsior Herold Clinic, Dept. 3000, Excelsior Spgs., Mo.

### Tip for the Future:

## BE A MAN OF ACTION —

Read and use a book by a Master of Action!

## SCIENTOLOGY

The Fundamentals of Thought  
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the famous Expedition and Aviation writer gives you the science that refutes the impossibilities!

In America it doesn't even take very long to do the impossible... You CAN raise your IQ... You CAN shorten your reaction time... You CAN raise your action level! Even Olympic Teams use Scientology!

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Silver Spring  
Maryland

## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

stituting s-f, it is difficult to keep up with all of them. The latest new publication to be announced is of definite interest for the editor will be none other than Forrest J. Ackerman, known far and wide as Mr. Science Fiction. Editing a professional magazine is probably the only facet of science fiction which has not been previously occupied by Forry, and we wish him only the best with his new magazine, *Sci-Fi...Science Fiction* Stories, SFQ's sister magazine, rates quite highly with the connoisseurs these days. Thomas S. Gardner, who annually reviews all magazine s-f published, rates SFS right under the "big-three" (*Astounding*, *Galaxy*, and *Fantasy and Science Fiction*). To corroborate this opinion, a poll taken of the readers of *Fantasy Times* shows SFS in 4th place, right under the same big three... "Death of a Dinosaur," by Sam Moskowitz (*Amazing Stories*, August, 1956) was originally written for the magazine which employs Sam, *Quick Frozen Foods*. The editor-in-chief didn't have the nerve to print it, and was quite surprised when Sam waved a nice, fat check under his nose several weeks later.

News from London displays the fact that the World Convention group have the situation well-in-hand. The affair will be held at the Kings Court Hotel, Leinster Gardens, London. (They claim they had a little difficulty locating the right place.) Apparently the deciding factor in this instance was the address—Leinster Gardens! Room and breakfast will amount to the almost-unbelievable sum of \$2.80 per night! It is quite conceivable that transportation from America to London will not prove too costly, for arrangements are being made to charter planes from New York City. (People interested in flying under this arrangement should communicate with David A. Kyle, WPDM, Potsdam, New York). Everyone is invited to send \$1 to the convention group immediately. This \$1 will enroll you as a member of the sponsoring group, the World Science Fiction Society, and you will receive



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# Amazing Proof That Anyone Can Play Music!

No Teacher or Special "Talent" Needed — We Show You How to Sit Right Down and START PLAYING REAL MUSIC at Once

IT'S not what we say about our wonderful easy way to learn music that really counts. It's what our 999,999 STUDENTS say. And THEY send us thousands of enthusiastic comments like those reprinted here — saying it's what they've always dreamed of! A quick, easy way of learning to play any musical instrument. WITHOUT suffering through dull "theories" first. WITHOUT practicing scales and exercises. WITHOUT spending time and money on a private teacher.

You just sit right down at the piano, guitar, accordion—or any instrument you're interested in—and actually begin to play. Simple songs at first. Then more advanced compositions. Soon you'll amaze your friends by playing almost anything they request!

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No "trick" methods. You play real sheet music. Big, clear pictures and simple directions make every step easy as A-B-C. No

clear, even children "catch on" right away. Whole family can learn for price of one. Costs only a few cents a lesson, including sheet music.

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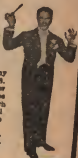
The whole fascinating story of this revolutionary new way to learn music is told in a 36-page illustrated book. You may have a copy FREE simply by mailing coupon. No obligation; no salesman will call on you. U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC, Studio A2745, Port Washington, N. Y. (Special Reduced Prices on instruments in our store.) New in Our 50th Successful Year.



## Our Former Student LAWRENCE WELK

Now Has Two Regular Full Hour TV Shows Weekly— with his Own Orchestra!

Telecasts his famous shows from Hollywood Over ABC-TV Every Monday and Saturday Night



MR. WELK says: "I got my start in music with a U. S. School of Music course. How easy it is to learn to read notes and play an instrument this 'teach yourself' way! In fact this school did so much for me that I've enrolled my two daughters. "I highly recommend your school. My best wishes for your continued success."

Lawrence Welk,  
Hollywood, Calif.

## 12-Year-Old Surprises Her Friends

"I am twelve years old. Thanks to your Course, I was able to play for the department in our church. All my friends were certainly surprised when they discovered I could play!" — Patsy Jeffrey, Sweetwater, Texas.

## "Opened Door to Popularity"

"I was able to play places in a short time. Family and friends certainly surprised. Course opened door to popularity." — Peter M. Kazero, P. O. Brokenhead, Manitoba. (Picture on other side of page)

## Now Invited Out Lots

"It's been fun. Haven't cost any where near as much as private teacher. Now invited to affairs, dances. Auditioned for 'Harem Dance Jambo'." — Howard Hopkins, E. Syracuse, N. Y. (Picture on other side of page)



## Stop Cheating Yourself

of These Joyful Popularity! New friends. Gay parties. Good times. Career. Extra Money. Appreciate and converse about music. Learn five and compositions of masters. Mental health worries. Making creative work. Gain self-satisfaction.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Piano           | <input type="checkbox"/> Pipe, Hammond, | <input type="checkbox"/> Piccolo        |
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Do you have the instrument?—

Mr. Mrs. Miss  
Address  
(Please Print Carefully)

City State  
(Insert Zone Number, if Any)

NOTE: ☐ If under 18 years of age check for booklet A

a membership card, all advance publicity, as well as a copy of the program booklet following the convention. Write to: Roberta Wild, 204 Wellmeadow Road, Catford, London, SE-6, England.

**A**ND NOW for something new in "Inside Science Fiction"—a guest article:

### THE EASTERN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

by Allan Howard

Among the non-essential activities curtailed by World War II was science fiction fanning. As fans began to be released from the armed services and overtime hours in war production plants their increased leisure time permitted them to return to their first love, s-f fandom. Thus, in early

1946, at a meeting in Rahway, N. J. at the home of a local fan, plans were made for a new s-f organization. A committee consisting of Sam Moskowitz, Joe Kennedy and George R. Fox were selected to put on a one-day convention to publicize, and raise funds for, the new club.

On March 3, 1946 more than 100 persons crowded into Slovak-Sokol Hall in Newark, N. J. at this first post-war science fiction convention to hear many outstanding people speak on the theme, "Is Science Over-taking Science Fiction?" This affair received favorable writeups in newspapers, and formed the basis of an article on s-f in *Harper's Magazine* by William S. Baring-Gould. With a net profit of \$50.00 from the convention as the nucleus for a treasury, the

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For Indoor Or  
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Parties —  
Gatherings —  
Basement or  
Den

This beautiful, portable Home Bar makes it easy to serve guests in real style. Made for both indoor and outdoor use, its handsome contrast of wood grain & gold finish makes for a sparkling setting in the home. Adds class to any party or gathering, and points up the cleverness of its proud owner. And, for relaxing at home, in the parlor, den or basement it's certainly a convenient, handsome addition. Only \$4.98. Comparable in satisfaction and utility to bars selling for \$30.

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Use it 10 Days FREE! If not delighted, return for full refund. But Order now! Because of its large size we are forced to ask for 63c additional shipping charges.

### FEATURES

- It's Portable — Sets Up Indoors Or Out
- Built In Shelf Holds Full Party Supplies
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- Stain Resistant Bar Top

### It's Big—

39" wide, 38" high, 13" deep

Sturdily built of aluminum laminated & wood grain finished Multi-Flute Fibreboard, this handsome home bar is resistant to alcohol and soda stains. Handy built-in shelf holds full supply of bottles, glasses, and napkins. Full size bar top holds drinks, pretzels, chips, etc. Sets up in a jiffy and folds compact for easy storage. A beaut for your home, and a novel gift.

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THE S. J. WEGMAN COMPANY

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Rush my new portable Home Bar at once if I am not delighted. I may return it after ten days Free Trial for prompt refund at full purchase price.

- ☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman on delivery plus C.O.D. shipping charges.
- ☐ I enclose 4.98 + 63c shipping charges

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

## INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

first organizational meeting of the new regional club was held the following month at the same hall with 16 fans present. The name, Eastern Science Fiction Association, was adopted and Sam Moskowitz was elected Director.

Desiring to keep the club clear of the aura of juvenility that sometimes prevailed in many previous organizations, Moskowitz early set the pattern to which the ESFA has adhered to this day. Meetings were conducted in an adult fashion, yet with a minimum of formality, and worthwhile programs and discussions were carried on. There was a minor schism of a teen-age element in the first year because of this. By January, 1947, membership had increased to 40 and during the following month was inaugurated the ESFA policy of having a speaker from the professional facet of the field each month.

On its anniversary meeting every March the club has an expanded meeting, with possibly four top men from the pro s-f world as speakers, usually on some timely key-note science fictional topic of the day. But the speaking roles are not entirely taken up by professional men. Efforts are made to encourage any creative or speaking talents that members may possess so that the programs may not lag on the rare months when it is not possible to obtain a science fiction celebrity. Other things which are sometimes offered are science fiction movies, tape recordings, s-f quizzes and games, news notes, book reviews, auctions and other things which normally interest s-f people. In the summer months the club sometimes goes on a picnic or a boat ride.

One very important reason for the stability of the club is that it has always operated within its income. The original \$50 is still intact in the bank and has been more than doubled. It was only recently that inflation caught up with the organization to the point where it was necessary to raise the original 35¢ dues to 50¢ per

[Turn Page]



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### OR IT DOESN'T COST YOU A CENT!

It's true! Now you can get the breath-taking acceleration... jack-rabbit starts... blasting new power that you've dreamed about for years—simply by harnessing the raw, inherent gasoline that your engine is wasting today!

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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

month. These dues pay for the rent of the hall, postage, and dinner for the speakers at the meeting after the-meeting at a downtown restaurant. Up to the present it has never been necessary to assess members or to charge admission to non-members.

By April, 1949 the ESFA had built up a nation-wide reputation as a model s-f group despite the presence of a few undesirables who had been admitted because there was no method of screening applicants. A few other individuals had conceived grandiose schemes in which the modest and well-guarded treasury would play a starring role. At this meeting Sam Moskowitz, who had served six consecutive six-month terms as Director, declined to be a candidate, feeling he could carry on a better house-cleaning from the floor. Dr. Thomas S. Gardner was elected and presided for the next six months. During this in orderly and democratic procedure, time, the club's problems were solved and various reforms were instituted, and a committee to pass on applicants was appointed by the chair.

IN OCTOBER 1949, Moskowitz was again elected Director and his return was accompanied by a resumption of the strong programs which had helped to build the reputation of the ESFA. In March, 1950, Hugo Gernsback, Willy Ley and other speakers drew an attendance of 100. The success of this meeting was followed by a three-day convention, jointly-sponsored by the Hydra Club (a New York professional s-f writers' club) and the ESFA over the July 4 weekend in New York at the Henry Hudson Hotel.

The lineup of professionals who have been speakers at ESFA reads like the contents page of a giant anthology. John W. Campbell, Jr., Hugo Gernsback, and Robert W. Lowndes are just a few of the editors. Writers commence with Asimov and run almost through the alphabet. Hannes Bok, Frank R.

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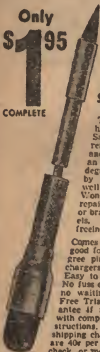
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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

Paul, and Kelly Freas represent the illustrators who have attended.

In October, 1952 Sam Moskowitz become editor of *Science Fiction Plus*, and declined further nomination. Allen Howard was elected at this meeting and is the present Director. In Howard's regime the momentum gained under Moskowitz enabled the club to function much as it did before, in spite of the general slump of 1953 that hit fan clubs as well as magazines.

With things now looking generally brighter, the ESFA is attempting to get the newer practitioners of s-f to speak at the club, as well as members of the old guard. In recent months former fans, Randall Garrett, Harlan Ellison, Robert Silverberg, and Henry Slesar have made their first speaking appearance before an s-f group as writers, at the ESA.

Meetings are held at the Slovak-Sokol Hall, 358 Morris Avenue, Newark, New Jersey, at 2:30 PM on the first Sunday of each month. For further information write to Allan Howard, 101 Fairmount Avenue, Newark 7, New Jersey.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**B**EING A science fiction columnist and an alleged expert in the field, quite frequently we receive letters of comment, usually plied with a question or two. Some of these queries, it is felt, are of general interest and, every now and then, we shall print a few of them. Starting the ball rolling, here is one which should interest Florida readers:

I would like any and all information about any s-f fanzines published here. Thank you.  
John L. Alexander, 6960 Indian Creek Drive, Miami Beach 41 Florida.

John, offhand we can't think of any published in your immediate vicinity, but if there are any (and it is quite probable there are), we feel certain you will hear from the editors of any such in the near future.

Having only recently begun to read your column, I'm not sure if  
[Turn To Page 128]

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# SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

you print fan news other than your reviews of fanzines. In the event you do, you would do us a great service to publish the following announcement: San Francisco, having no active science fiction club, we are organizing one. Those in San Francisco, or the Bay area, interested in attending meeting should contact Anna Silveria, 948 Oak Street, (MA 1-0124), San Francisco—The Solarites.

I am wondering, too, if you have a mimeograph list of the fanzines, as we would like to send for them for our club library and discussion at our meetings. Thanks very much. Anna Silveria.

*Anna, we are always very pleased to be able to lend a helping hand to any science fiction club. Let's all you fans in the Bay area get in touch with Miss Silveria. Also, fanzine editors should send her and her club sample copies, as it may result in the receipt of coin of the realm. Unfortunately, we have no list of fanzines on hand. It might be suggested, however, that past issues of Science Fiction Quarterly and Science Fiction Stories be looked up for recommended fanzines.*

I don't want to appear dense, but I don't understand the word "fanzine," in connection with your name. I have been out of the science fiction circle for about eight years and I guess that word has been added since by amateurs and sent in to you then. If it means stories written for reviewing, I would like to know as I do write short stories for amusement only. Will you please give out with a few details? I would appreciate it very much. Sara M. Chancellor, 33 Bushnell Road, Eugene, Oregon.  
We are quite sure, Sara, that you will receive at least a few explanation of what fanzines are before the month is out. Briefly, however, they

[Turn To Page 130]

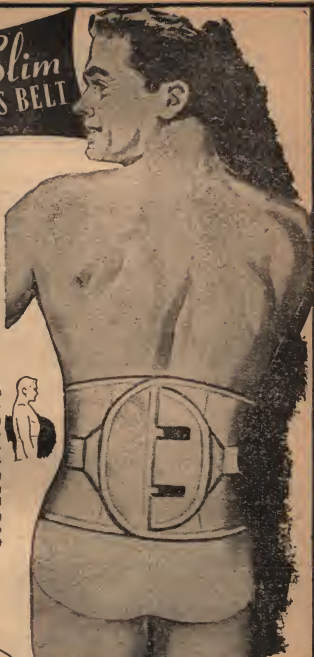
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are magazines published by readers and collectors with all aspects of s-f. Some do print stories by amateurs, while others do not. Some publish news and gossip columns, articles of general interest—in fact, just about anything their editors feel like discussing. As advised above, send for a few of those recommended in previous columns.

In the January, 1957 issue of *Science Fiction Stories* you mention a "Bibliography of Talbot Mundy" as a prize in the Fandom Fiction Contest. As a longtime fan of Mundy's, I am interested in getting such a bibliography. Can you tell me where I can buy one? Stephen G. Hulse, 607 Georgia Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

You can get this one, as well as a bibliography of Edgar Rice Burroughs, from Bradford M. Day, 127-01 116th Avenue, S. Ozone Park 20, New York. Price is 50¢ per copy.

### THE FANZINES

**STELLAR:** Published by Ted E. White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church, Virginia, 15¢ per copy, 2 for 25¢. To start off, it must be said that this is one of the most perfectly-reproduced pieces of mimeography we have ever seen. (And that covers a lot of territory—or mimeography.) The current issue contains forty large pages concerned, primarily, not with articles about fans, but with fic-

tion about fans. The feature is a round-robin serial, "The Death of Science Fiction." Larry Stark and Dick Ellington compose the current two chapters of this epic of the near future in which is depicted the persecution of science readers by a super-McCarthyite government. The principal characters are prominent members of the fan field, including such people as Sam Moskowitz, David A. Kyle, Ron Smith, and even an ex-fan like Robert Silverberg manages to get into the story. Don't know how serious the boys are being in this story—but the McCarthy era certainly appears to have waned in reality.

Ted White dedicates this issue to Lee Hoffman Shaw, and there is a special section devoted to Lee who, at one time, was just about the leading fan of the nation. (Her new surname, incidentally, stemmed from a recent merger with Larry Shaw, editor of *Infinity*.) Lee contributes a humorous story about the death of Bob Tucker, which no one would believe because of the numerous death hoaxes in which Mr. Tucker has been involved. Then there is an analysis of Lee's activities and contributions to the field by Larry Stark, plus several other interesting articles. Very nice issue.

Please note new address when sending fanzines: Robert A. Madle, 7720 Oxman Road, Palmer Park, Hyattsville, Maryland. And we promise to devote more space to the reviews next time around.

## Cassandra

the shoulders. "All right," he demanded, shaking Kuprin violently, "talk. What's going to happen?"

For the first time moisture gleamed in Kuprin's eyes and he looked suddenly quite old. "Here?" he said, his voice dead and monotonous. "What happens here isn't important, it's what comes after. It's what starts here tonight."

The house rocked then with the

(continued from page 107)

shock waves of jets speeding overhead. The Lieutenant raised his head. "We don't have any in the air," he shouted and ran for the door.

"They're coming back," he shouted from the patio.

Kuprin pushed the wooden figure of Colonel Bellows aside. He sat stiffly as the sound thundered overhead.

He said nothing.

He just sat, his lips moving silently. Counting the seconds.

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These IMPORTED beauties must be seen to be appreciated. Each ring lovingly fashioned by skilled Old World jewelry craftsmen. Each exquisite mounting in gleaming, tarnish-proof, white gold finish Rhodium, topped by three or more big, brilliant, hand-set stones that flash like real diamonds. Each stone double hand-cut and multi-faceted. Here are rings for which you'd expect to pay many hundreds of dollars at fine shops.

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size (paper or string).

Check (rings) wanted here

No. 515	No. 510	No. 530	No. 524
No. 527	No. 512	No. 522	No. 519

Be sure to enclose accurate finger size (string or strip of paper)

Name  PLEASE PRINT PLAINLY

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Another scan  
by  
cape1736

